

THE GODDESSES' SHRINE FAMILY: THE MUNAKATA THROUGH THE
KAMAKURA ERA

by

BRENDAN ARKELL MORLEY

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Andrew Edmund Goble, Chair of the Examining Committee

June 01 2009.
Date

Committee in Charge: Andrew Edmund Goble, Chair
Ina Asim
Jason P. Webb

Accepted by:

Dean of the Graduate School

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This thesis presents an historical study of the Kyushu shrine family known as the Munakata, beginning in the fourth century and ending with the onset of Japan's medieval age in the fourteenth century. The tutelary deities of the Munakata Shrine are held to be the progeny of the Sun Goddess, the most powerful deity in the Shinto pantheon; this fact speaks to the long-standing historical relationship the Munakata enjoyed with Japan's ruling elites. Traditional tropes of Japanese history have generally cast Kyushu as the periphery of Japanese civilization, but in light of recent scholarship, this view has become untenable. Drawing upon extensive primary source material, this thesis will provide a detailed narrative of Munakata family history while also building upon current trends in Japanese historiography that locate Kyushu within a broader East Asian cultural matrix and reveal it to be a central locus of cultural production on the Japanese archipelago.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Brendan Arkell Morley

PLACE OF BIRTH: San Francisco, CA

DATE OF BIRTH: 03 March 1982

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon

DEGREES AWARDED:

Master of Arts in Asian Studies, 2009, University of Oregon

Bachelor of Arts in Japanese and Chinese, 2006, University of Oregon

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Pre-modern Japanese History and Literature

Japanese Linguistics and Philology

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Graduate Teaching Fellow, University of Oregon, 2007-2009

GRANTS, AWARDS AND HONORS:

Phi Beta Kappa, Oregon Six, University of Oregon, 2006

Dean's Scholarship, University of Oregon, 2000-2004

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is not precisely clear when the Munakata clan first came into being, but archaeological and textual evidence suggest an origin sometime in the late fourth or early fifth century. The name Munakata came to denote both a region, located on the northwest coast of Kyushu in what is now Fukuoka Prefecture, and its principal clan. The cultural roots of the Munakata clan are deeply intertwined with their three tutelary goddesses, the veneration of whom constitutes the central element in a tradition of *kami* worship known as the Munakata cult (宗像信仰). Among shrines dedicated to the Munakata goddesses, the oldest and most important are Okitsu Shrine, located on the island of Okinoshima, Nakatsu Shrine, located on the island of Ôshima, and Hetsu Shrine, located in the village of Tashima on Kyushu's west coast. Each of these (including the entire island of Okinoshima) is currently designated a national historic site, and efforts are being made to have them included in UNESCO's list of world heritage sites. Together, the three shrines comprise the tripartite complex known as the Munakata Grand Shrine.

The following thesis is organized chronologically and will treat approximately 1000 years of Munakata history. CHAPTER TWO covers the fourth through the eighth centuries and examines various aspects of the early Munakata clan through mythology, historical linguistics, and the archaeological record. The Munakata cult was among the first regional cults to receive patronage from Yamato kings, making an understanding of Munakata mythology and ritual practice integral to the broader study of early Japan. With the formation of a centralized bureaucratic state in the eighth century, new sources of textual data regarding the Munakata begin to appear. CHAPTER THREE covers the ninth and tenth centuries and, drawing on sources such as the *Shoku nihongi* and *Sandai jitsuroku*, focuses on the development of the Munakata shrine under the rubric of Japan's imperial polity. After the tenth century, gradual attenuation of central authority engendered changes in the way the Munakata family managed their shrine enterprise. This is dealt with in CHAPTER FOUR, which covers multiple facets of Munakata history as it unfolded during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, paying particular attention to issues of property ownership and family participation in the Hakata-South China cultural concourse. The material introduced in this chapter locates the history of the Munakata family within both the larger Japanese medieval experience and the vibrant international milieu of the Hakata region. CHAPTER FIVE is an annotated translation of a law code drafted in 1313 by the head of the Munakata shrine. This important document can shed much light on the dynamics of family decision-making and the management of shrine resources. While it has received modest attention by Japanese scholars, this thesis

gives the first translation into English. Finally, CHAPTER SIX provides a brief overview of post-Kamakura developments and an outline of future research interests. Before proceeding to CHAPTER TWO, however, an exploration of early archipelagan history will prove fruitful, as the Munakata family cannot be adequately analyzed in the absence of a larger historical context.

The Setting: Power and Prestige in Early Japan

In the early centuries of the Common Era, few ethnic or political demarcations fundamentally separated peoples on the southern tip of the Korean peninsula from those inhabiting the western regions of the Japanese archipelago. Historical chronicles, both from Japan and China, indicate that movement between the islands and the continent was fluid and generally uninhibited: According to the third-century Chinese history *San Guo Zhi* (三國志), inhabitants of the archipelago “ride boats north and south to trade for grain,”¹ and the *Nihon shoki* reports that as late as 471, immigrant groups lived in communities scattered throughout the Japanese islands.² Adapting a term used to describe Minoan civilization on the island of Crete, Gari Ledyard posited the existence of

¹ Quoted from Charles Holcombe, “Trade-Buddhism: Maritime Trade, Immigration, and the Buddhist Landfall in Early Japan,” p. 290.

² *Ibid.*, p. 290. See *Nihon shoki*, Yûryaku 16.7.

a thalassocratic society, i.e. one whose power and social integrity was based on seafaring, that stretched from the southern tip of the Korean peninsula, across the Straits of Tsushima and the Genkai Sea, through Kyushu and western Honshu, and perhaps as far east as the Kinai region.³ As a conceptual framework, Ledyard's "Thalassocracy of Wa" is useful in several ways, not least because it helps shed light on the touchy issue of a "Japanese" presence on the Korean peninsula, which is well attested to in the early Yamato chronicles. More importantly for this study, the Thalassocracy provides the setting in which to understand the interactions between early archipelagan paramounts, whose authority and prestige were in large measure dependent upon imbibing the cultural fruits of the continent, and clans such as the Munakata, who occupied strategically significant coastal territories.

Archaeological evidence, much of which is discussed in chapter two, along with textual evidence from the *Nihon shoki*, demonstrates that the Munakata were active participants in the religious life of the archipelago by the mid fourth century. At this time, ships associated with the Yamato region (the political center of early Japanese kingship) plied the sea lanes between northwest Kyushu and the Asian mainland; some of the treasure they brought back ended up as offerings on the island of Okinoshima, a holy site maintained and venerated by the Munakata clan.⁴ By the time of the "Great King" known as Yûryaku, a Japanese ruler of the late fifth century, close relations between the

³ Gari Ledyard, "Gallop Along with the Horseriders: Looking for the Founders of Japan."

⁴ Joan R. Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*, p. 39.

Munakata clan and the Yamato paramounts were well established.⁵ Securing allies on Kyushu's northern coast aided the Yamato kings' ability to secure prestige goods from overseas, the redistribution of which to allies became a critical element in establishing their cultural and political preeminence.⁶ Another tactic adopted by Yamato leaders during the fourth and fifth centuries in an effort to woo allies was the patronage of local religious cults. According to Joan Piggott, Great King Yûryaku "fulfilled the traditional sacerdotal functions of paramountcy by establishing patronage relations with regional cults and developing the royal role as preeminent ritual coordinator of the archipelago."⁷ The veneration of the Munakata clan's tutelary goddesses was one early manifestation of this strategy.

Yet while Yûryaku wielded considerable power, the polity over which he presided was not centralized or tightly integrated.⁸ Rather it was a segmented, confederated polity the center of which was the Nara basin and Osaka alluvial plain, termed the "coalescent core" by archaeologist Gina Barnes.⁹ This region is roughly coincident with the Kinai (畿内) area, a Chinese word denoting the royal domain.¹⁰ After Yûryaku's death, the

⁵ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, pp. 823-4.

⁶ Piggott, *Emergence*, p. 56

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 46.

⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 46, 65.

⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 45.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 47-8, 315.

archipelago witnessed a marked devolution of political authority that was not remedied until King Keitai's ascension in the early sixth century.¹¹ Following the narrative given in the *Nihon shoki*, Keitai was responsible for extending Yamato authority, through the use of military force, over areas of northern Kyushu that refused to accede to royal demands. In the year 528, Yamato forces did battle with an alliance of Kyushu chieftains led by a man known as Iwai (磐井); this conflict, recorded in the Yamato histories as the Iwai Rebellion, would settle once and for all the issue of suzerainty on the island.¹² The conflict was precipitated by the refusal of Iwai to contribute to a 60,000 man military expedition supposedly designed to protect archipelagan interests on the Korean Peninsula.¹³ Although a force of 60,000 men could probably never have been raised even

¹¹ Supporters of Egami Namio's famous Horserider Theory (or variations thereon) often cast Keitai as the founder of a new, more "native" political order. Gari Ledyard, who developed the idea that the Japanese archipelago was conquered by the Puyo people towards the end of the fourth century, sees Keitai as representing a "dominantly non-Puyo, mainly Wa ethnic entity." See Ledyard, "Galloping along with the Horseriders," p. 254. Joan Piggott, while not endorsing any version of the Horserider Theory, notes that Keitai was raised outside the coalescent core, only later establishing himself in Yamato. She discusses the ascension of Keitai and his successors at length in *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*, pp. 66-74.

¹² Keitai's traditional reign dates are from 507 to 531, but Piggott (*Emergence*, p. 67) notes that Kakubayashi Fumio has posited his tenure to have been shorter than this, lasting from 507 to 518. Kakubayashi more or less agrees with the dates given for the Iwai Rebellion, roughly dating the conflict to the "second decade" of the sixth century (*Emergence*, p. 70). If this dating for Keitai and the Iwai Rebellion is correct, then the Great King who formally presided over the use of Yamato military force against Iwai was not Keitai himself, but an immediate successor.

¹³ At this time, the peninsula was shared by the kingdoms of Koguryo, Paekche, and Silla, along with the confederacy known as Kaya or, in many Japanese sources, Kara. For a description of Japanese interactions with the Korean kingdoms, see Bruce L. Batten, *Gateway to Japan: Hakata in War and Peace, 500-1300*, chapter 1. Prior to being held up by Iwai, traditional accounts hold that the Yamato forces were being dispatched to an area of the peninsula known as Mimana (or Imna), which had long maintained political and cultural connections with the Japanese

under the best of circumstances, the recalcitrance of Iwai and his cohorts to participate caused an irreparable rift with the polity Keitai had worked to build. Iwai himself was not a complete outsider to Yamato politics, for he possessed the title of *kuni no miyatsuko* (国造), which reflected Yamato recognition of his position of authority over lands in north-central Kyushu.¹⁴ For some years, he seems to have tolerated the demands this entitlement placed upon him, but the prospect of sacrificing his men in an ill-conceived war and, perhaps, a desire to avoid damaging his clan's private relations with foreign contacts, compelled him to refuse Yamato's requests.¹⁵

The battle that followed became one of the last great campaigns of Yamato consolidation, and although it is classed as a "rebellion" in the extant Japanese chronicles, many scholars tend to regard it as a war of unification waged by Yamato against chieftains in Kyushu who were not receptive to demands on their resources, and who could not be completely subjugated by other means, e.g. marriage alliances, the

archipelago, in an effort to help recover territory recently annexed from the Kaya Confederacy by the powerful kingdom of Silla. For a succinct but informative account of the Iwai Rebellion, see Kagamiyama Takeshi and Tamura Enchô, eds., *Kodai no Nihon*, vol. 3, "Kyushu," pp. 159-61.

¹⁴ See Piggott, *Emergence*, p. 318, and Michiko Y. Aoki, *Records of Wind and Earth*, p. 283. The *kuni no miyatsuko* (alt. *kokuzô*) are treated in detail in Yagi Atsumu, "Kokuzôsei no kôzô," in *Iwanami Kôza Nihon Rekishi*, vol. 2, pp. 1-28.

¹⁵ The extent of Iwai's independent involvement with Korean kingdoms is unclear, but traditional Japanese accounts excoriate him for receiving bribes from Silla in exchange for impeding the Yamato Court's war plans. Although the truth of such accusations is obviously suspect, they might indicate that Iwai did maintain some ties with peninsular contacts, which would have been dangerous in time of war and could easily have been interpreted in a treasonous light by the Yamato chroniclers. Yoshida Akira suspects that Iwai may have opposed Yamato's alliance with Paekche and cultivated his own with Silla. See Yoshida, "Kodai kokka no keisei" in *Iwanami Kôza Nihon Rekishi*, vol. 2, p. 50.

granting of titles, etc.¹⁶ Iwai ultimately failed in his stand, and the trend towards Yamato preeminence over the central and western parts of the archipelago proved ineluctable. It does not appear known what role (if any) the Munakata played in the Iwai affair. In light of their strong and thitherto unbroken ties to the coalescent core, support for Yamato's cause is not unlikely, but no direct archaeological or textual evidence attests to this.¹⁷

The victory enabled Yamato leaders to secure control over both political and commercial relations with foreign nations.¹⁸ Yet its military superiority over archipelagan rivals apparently did not translate to prescience in the foreign policy arena, for despite the setback caused by Iwai's noncompliance, Yamato did eventually dispatch a force of more modest proportions to Korea in 529. The move was an unmitigated disaster. The senior officer on the expedition, Ômi no Kenu, attempted to broker a settlement that would stem Silla's expansion and salvage the Japanese position at Mimana.¹⁹ This failed completely,

¹⁶ Yoshida, "Kodai kokka no keisei," p. 41. Building on the Horserider Theory, Gari Ledyard has argued that the Iwai Rebellion represents the last stand of elements loyal to King Homuda (Emperor Ôjin), the supposed foreign founder of the first unifying polity on the archipelago. This view holds that after Homuda's death, the dynasty he established in the Yamato area gave way to a new polity, which proceeded to absorb new lands and subjugate those still loyal to the old order. See Ledyard, "Gallop Along With the Horseriders," p. 250.

¹⁷ It should be noted that while the Munakata were, in terms of overall distance, situated near to the epicenter of the Iwai Rebellion, their territory was on the west coast, whereas Iwai's power base was centered primarily on the Tsukushi Plain and the north coast near what is now Kitakyushu. This area is separated from Munakata territory by the Tsukushi mountain range, meaning no physical involvement in the conflict on the part of the Munakata clan need be assumed.

¹⁸ Yoshida, "Kodai kokka no keisei," pp. 50-1.

undermining the international credibility of the Yamato regime and irrevocably weakening any pretense of authority that its kings may have claimed over peninsular territory. Never again would an archipelagan polity have a secure foothold on the Korean Peninsula.²⁰

Despite the failure overseas, Yamato kings during the sixth century succeeded in building upon the trends begun by Keitai, eventually establishing the first true royal dynasty on the archipelago.²¹ This process culminated with the ascension of Suiko, a female ruler whose era coincides with Japan's transition from protohistory to history.²² Together with her supporters (including the illustrious Prince Shôtoku), Suiko articulated a new cosmology of kingship deeply grounded in Chinese philosophy. She presided over the writing of histories that served to canonize selected myths and formalize the right of hereditary rule; and after a century of problematic relations with the kingdom of Silla, Suiko's court chose diplomacy, opening talks in the year 621.²³

¹⁹ Confusingly, Ômi no Kenu is also often referred to as Kenu no Omi. The difference is that the first Ômi is a location (近江), while the second *omi* is a title (臣). Hence his full appellation would be Ômi no Kenu no Omi (近江毛野臣).

²⁰ A Yamato position on the Korean Peninsula need not be a Japanese “foothold” as such: in light of both the high social traffic between the peninsula and the archipelago seen in the Yayoi and early Kofun periods, Mimana may be seen to represent a lingering vestige of an earlier order under which parts of both the peninsula and the archipelago were loosely united, or at least not formally separated.

²¹ Piggott, *Emergence*, p. 66.

²² *Ibid.* p. 67.

The ideological seeds planted during Suiko's era would germinate in the form of a more integrated polity, the subsequent growth of which was accelerated by both domestic and foreign crises erupting in the late seventh century.²⁴ On the whole, however, governance on the archipelago during the seventh century still remained a fundamentally decentralized and segmented affair, whereby local elites participated in the cultural fabric of Yamato kingship, but were not tightly bound to the Yamato court through the kind of radial linkages that characterized Chinese political ideals.²⁵ As had been true in past centuries, the loyalty of regional chiefs was maintained through the sharing of cultural and technological capital from abroad and, significantly for our purposes, through the development of a unifying religious cult that incorporated local deities into a shared pantheon.²⁶ Moreover, it was during the seventh century that work began on the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*.²⁷ These works contain the earliest known written attestations to the Munakata clan and their tutelary goddesses, and it is to them that we now turn.

²³ Ibid. pp. 67, 80, 98, 100-1. According to Piggott, the first written genealogies were likely compiled during Suiko's lifetime, and her court also sent the first Yamato embassy to Sui China in the year 600.

²⁴ The polity referred to here is the so-called *ritsuryō* order, which will be discussed in chapter three, along with the foreign threats that helped catalyze it. The role played by foreign pressure in the development of the *ritsuryō* order is explored thoroughly in Bruce L. Batten, "Foreign Threat and Domestic Reform: The Emergence of the Ritsuryō State."

²⁵ The use of the term "radial" is used by Piggott (in contradistinction to the term "galactic") to describe an integrated polity with a single center. See Piggott, *Emergence*, p. 46.

²⁶ Piggott, *Emergence*, p. 100.

CHAPTER II

THE MUNAKATA GODDESSES IN YAMATO

MYTHOLOGY

The mythological roots of the Munakata cult center on three goddesses: Tagori-hime (or, in the *Kojiki*, Tagiri-hime), Tagitsu-hime, and Ichikishima-hime.²⁸ It is worthy of note that the Munakata deities do not include a male member. That a female deity (or deified female ruler) would be enshrined and worshipped is not particularly unusual:

²⁷ Although the texts were not presented until the early eighth century, their compilation was a protracted historiographical undertaking that was begun many decades earlier. See Herman Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan: The Tenmu Dynasty, 650-800*, p. 8.

²⁸ I will render the goddesses' names with *dakuon* (voiced) sounds as this is the convention followed in current publications. In the early eighth century, however, *seion* (unvoiced) sounds were clearly used. The orthography used for the goddesses' names varies, with the *Kojiki* relying largely on desemantized kanji pronounced according to their *on* readings and the *Nihon shoki* employing the *kun* readings of kanji for essentially the same phonetic purpose. Hence, for Tagiri-hime, the *Kojiki* gives 多紀理毘賣 (pronounced Takiri-hime as the *ki* was unvoiced) and the *Nihon shoki* gives 田心姫, pronounced Takori-hime. For Tagitsu-hime, we have 田寸津比賣 and 湍津姫; the former of these was certainly pronounced Takitsu-hime, and the latter probably was. For Ichikishima-hime we have 市寸島比賣 and 市杵嶋姫, both of which may also be pronounced Itsukishima-hime, since in ancient times 市 was also read as *itsu*. More will be said about the orthography and underlying meaning of the goddesses' names on pages 22-23.

Tamayori-hime, the mother of the legendary emperor Jimmu, is a principal object of worship at Hakozaki Shrine, and Jingû Kôgo, the ancient Wa warrior-queen who supposedly conquered the Korean peninsula, is held as a primary deity at both the Hakozaki and Hachiman-Usa shrines.²⁹ Yet both these establishments also take the emperor Ôjin, a male figure, as a primary deity. Sumiyoshi Shrine in Hakata enshrines three principal male gods, the so-called Three Sumiyoshi Deities (*Sumiyoshi Sanjin*), though Jingû Kôgo is venerated there as well.³⁰ Hence, the Munakata Shrine, whose tutelary triumvirate consists of *only* female deities, is quite unique among its peers.

The birth of the Munakata goddesses, extensively detailed in the *Kojiki*, *Kujiki*,³¹ and the *Nihon shoki*, is the result of a famous standoff between Amaterasu and her brother, Susa no O. The *Kojiki* and *Kujiki* give only one version of the story, but the *Nihon shoki*, written in a style reminiscent of classical Chinese histories, provides four. In terms of narrative structure and plot, each account unfolds along very similar lines, but

²⁹ See Kawada Takao, ed., *Nihon Rekishi Daijiten*, vol. 15 (Tokyo: Kawade Shobô Shinsha, 1964), p. 94 and Kokushi Daijiten Henshû Iinkai, ed., *Kokushi Daijiten*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kôbunkan, 1980), p. 65.

³⁰ Kawade, ed., *Nihon Rekishi Daijiten*, vol. 11, p. 82. The Three Sumiyoshi Deities (住吉三神) are Sokotsutsu no O no Mikoto, Nakatsutsu no O no Mikoto, and Uwatsutsu no O no Mikoto.

³¹ The proper name for the *Kujiki* is the *Sendai Kuji Hongi*. For centuries, it was regarded as an authentic ancient text on par with the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*; tradition even held that it was written by Shôtoku Taishi himself. Yet in the seventeenth century, the gifted scholar and founder of the Mito school of historical studies, Tokugawa Mitsukuni, published a theory that the work was a facsimile based on the *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, and other texts. Other contemporary philologists, including Motoori Norinaga, concurred with this assessment and the *Kujiki* fell from canonical status. Mitsukuni's theory is not universally endorsed, however. The most comprehensive treatment of *Kujiki* available in English is that of John Bentley, who argued in a linguistic analysis published in 2006 (see p. 12 below) that the work actually pre-dates both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*.

the order in which the goddesses are produced, as well as the precise manner of their birth, varies considerably. All versions begin with the infamous Susa no O traveling to Heaven to visit his sister. Susa no O has a reputation for crude behavior and violence; Amaterasu, depicted as rational and brave, naturally doubts the sincerity of his motives. She speculates that his visit might be a thinly veiled act of territorial aggression, and takes up arms to defend herself. To convince his sister that his motives are pure, Susa no O agrees to make a pact involving a series of rituals, out of which five male deities and three female deities are produced. The *Kojiki* relates the birth of the three female deities as follows:

Amaterasu first asked Susa no O for the ten-span sword he was carrying. She struck the sword, broke it into three sections and, with a jingling noise, rinsed the pieces in the True Well of Heaven. Chewing the pieces with a crunching noise, she spat them out. The august name of the (first) deity produced in the misty spray of her breath was Tagiri-hime no Mikoto, also known as Okinoshima-hime no Mikoto. Next, there was Ichikishima-hime no Mikoto, also known as Sayori-hime no Mikoto. Next still, there was Tagitsu-hime no Mikoto... Amaterasu distinguished the children, saying "...The three female offspring were produced from your seed, hence they are your children."³²

The first born deity, Tagiri-hime no Mikoto, is seated in the Munakata shrine of Okitsu. Next, Ichikishima-hime no Mikoto is seated in the Munakata shrine of Nakatsu. Next still, Tagitsu-hime no Mikoto is seated in the Munakata shrine of Hetsu. These three principal deities together constitute the Great Goddesses the Munakata lords (*kimi*) treasure and worship.³³

³² Elsewhere, five male deities were produced by Susa no O from an object of Amaterasu's; she regards these five male children as hers because they came from her seed, in contrast to the three female deities she produced from an object of her brother's.

³³ Takeda Yûkichi and Nakamura Hirotochi, ed., *Kojiki*, p. 35. Here and throughout translations are mine unless otherwise noted. The *Kojiki* segments above are rendered by Philippi (1968) as follows:

The first account of the Munakata goddesses' birth given in the *Kujiki* is similar, except that three swords of decreasing length are involved in the goddesses' birth, and Tagitsu-hime is born before Ichikishima-hime. In his pioneering study and translation of the *Kujiki*, John Bentley renders the relevant passage as follows:

Amaterasu made a vow with Susa no O, saying, "I will give you the jewels wrapped around my arm. You will then give me the sword(s) around your waist." With these vows, they exchanged the items. Amaterasu took the three swords around Susa no O's waist. Amaterasu washed the blade(s) of the sword(s) in the Heavenly Well, chewed it up with a crunching sound, and blew it out. Three female deities were born from the mist. The name of the deity born from the ten-span sword is Okitsushima-hime. The deity created from the nine-span sword is called Tagitsushima-hime. The deity appearing from the eight-span sword is named Ichikishima-hime.³⁴

Following this passage, the *Kujiki* gives a short addendum informing the reader of the goddesses' alternate names and the location of each goddesses' enshrinement. It states that Okitsushima-hime is alternatively known as Tagori-hime and resides in Okitsu

At this time, AMA-TERASU-OPO-MI-KAMĪ first asked for the sword ten hands long which TAKE-PAYA-SUSA-NÖ-WO-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ wore at his side. Breaking the sword in three pieces, she rinsed them, the jewels making a jingling sound, in [the heavenly well] AMĒ-NÖ-MANA-WI, chewed them to pieces, and spat them out. In the misty spray there came into existence a deity named TAKĪRI-BIME-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ, also named OKI-TU-SIMA-PIME-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ; next, IKITI-SIMA-PIME-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ, also named SA-YÖRI-BIME-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ; and next, TAKITU-PIME-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ. (Three deities)... At this time, AMA-TERASU-OPO-MI-KAMĪ said to PAYA-SUSA-NÖ-WO-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ: "...The first born three female children came into existence from your possessions, and are therefore your children." Thus saying, she distinguished [the offspring]. The first-born deity, TAKĪRI-BIME-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ, is enshrined in the OKI-TU-MIYA of MUNAKATA. Next, IKITI-SIMA-PIME-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ is enshrined in the NAKA-TU-MIYA of MUNAKATA. Next, TAKITU-PIME-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ is enshrined in the PE-TU-MIYA of MUNAKATA. These three deities are the three great deities worshipped by the KIMI of MUNAKATA.

³⁴ John R. Bentley, *The Authenticity of Sendai Kuji Hongi: A New Examination of Texts, with a Translation and Commentary*, p. 143, quoted with minor orthographic changes.

Shrine, that Tagitsu-hime is also called Hetsushima-hime and resides in Hetsu Shrine, and that Ichikishima-hime is also known as Nakatsushima-hime and resides on Nakatsu Island.³⁵ The addition of the word *shima* (“island”) to each of the goddesses’ names is an element found only in the *Kujiki*; the significance of this is not entirely clear. According to the most comprehensive study of Munakata mythology to be undertaken to date, the practice was probably a later development that sought to associate each goddess with her place of enshrinement in a terminologically consistent way.³⁶ In this view, the name Okitsushima-hime, which does appear in the *Nihon shoki* is the oldest, followed by Nakatsushima-hime (which is logically similar because Ôshima and Okinoshima are both islands). Finally, for the sake of consistency, the name Hetsushima-hime is said to have emerged in the early Heian Period. Naturally, this scenario rests upon the assumption that the *Kujiki* is a Heian-era work and thus not fully reflective of the earliest Munakata traditions.

The unique naming of the Munakata goddesses is, in itself, obviously not enough to prove or disprove the authenticity of the *Kujiki*, but it does raise some interesting questions. If the *Kujiki* was, as Bentley argues, “compiled from the draft of *Kojiki* and an intermediary text of *Nihon shoki*” (p. 82), then it is surprising that the addition of *shima* to the Munakata deities’ names would not appear in any of these latter works, including the *Shoki*’s variant versions. On the other hand, one may just as easily ask why, if the

³⁵ Bentley, p. 145.

³⁶ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 1, p. 233

Kujiki is indeed a derivative text, does it depart from both of its alleged models in the naming of the Munakata goddesses? Ultimately, it may be impossible to derive definitive answers to these questions; what is clear, however, is that regardless of when the text was written, its contribution to Munakata mythology cannot be dismissed.

According to the *Kujiki*, the pact between Amaterasu and Susa no O resulted in the birth of nine deities in all: three females and six males. Because the swords were Susa no O's possessions, the three goddesses are regarded as his children. Significantly, the *Kujiki* does not specify the goddesses as being directly venerated by the Munakata family, although it does say that the Munakata lords worshipped their father, Susa no O.³⁷ Even more striking, it associates the three goddesses with the Minuma family, another Kyushu clan from what would later become Chikugo Province. The *Kujiki* is not alone in making this association: the third (and final) alternate version given in the *Nihon shoki* says of the three goddesses "These are the deities worshipped by the Minuma lords of Tsukushi."³⁸ Minuma is thought to have been in the vicinity of what is today Mizawa District, in the very south of Fukuoka Prefecture, almost 70 kilometers away from traditional Munakata territory.³⁹ Assuming the texts' compilers and their sources were not simply mistaken, there emerges the possibility that the cult of the three goddesses extended beyond the Munakata clan and embraced a broader geographic area in western

³⁷ Bentley, p. 145.

³⁸ See Aston, *Nihongi*, p. 40.

³⁹ Sakamoto Tarô, Ienaga Saburô, Inoue Mitsusada, and Ôno Susumu, eds., *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, vol. 67, "Nihon shoki," pt. 1, p. 110, note 10; and p. 297, note 10.

Kyushu. Historian Tanaka Takashi appears to accept that the Minuma worshipped the three goddesses, but even to him it is unclear whether the Minuma and the Munakata both venerated the deities at the same time, or whether the cult moved from one clan to the other.⁴⁰

The primary version (本文) given in the *Nihon shoki* accords with the order of the goddesses' birth given in the *Kujiki*, but the location of each goddesses' enshrinement is not specified. Of greater historical interest are the alternate versions provided by the *Nihon shoki*, which appear as quotations or summaries from other sources.⁴¹ While maintaining the same basic storyline, these accounts exhibit a much more substantial degree of variation, as attested to by the third alternate referenced above. This suggests that the tale of the three goddesses may have been common to multiple mythological traditions and locales prior to its assimilation into the Yamato mythological corpus (which in turn may explain its association with both the Minuma and Munakata clans). From a politico-religious standpoint, the *Nihon shoki*'s first alternate version is especially significant, as it posits the three goddesses to be the progeny of Amaterasu alone:

⁴⁰ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 1, p. 117.

⁴¹ From a narratological standpoint, the quotation of multiple versions gives the *Nihon shoki* an aura of historical thoroughness, as if its author had painstakingly collected and recorded for posterity all extant accounts of the story. Of course, this very structure may be seen to contribute to the work's ideological mission to enhance Yamato cultural prestige; David Lurie describes the Age of the Gods sections (神代卷) of the *Nihon shoki* as "a carefully organized mythic narrative punctuated by a riot of variant versions known as *issho* 一書 ('one [text] writes')." Quoted from David Barnett Lurie, "The Origins of Writing in Early Japan: From the 1st to the 8th Century C.E.," Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 2001.

In one writing it is said: “The Sun Goddess knew all along that Susa no O no Mikoto harbored truculent, usurpative intentions. Upon his ascension (to Heaven), she immediately thought ‘It is not because my younger brother’s intentions are good that he is coming here. Surely he aims to seize my High Plain of Heaven.’ She thereupon made a warrior’s battle preparations: On her person, she wore a ten-span sword, a nine-span sword, and an eight-span sword; on her back, she slung a quiver, and on her arm, she affixed an arm guard that thundered when struck by the bowstring. Taking her bow in hand, an arrow at the ready, she set out alone to meet him and stop his incursion.

At this time, Susa no O pleaded with her, saying “I never had nefarious intent in coming here; I only wanted to see my older sister, so I came for a short visit.” The Sun Goddess and Susa no O stood facing each other and made a pact, wherein Amaterasu said: “If your heart is indeed pure, and you have no intent of despoiling or usurping (my High Plain of Heaven), then the children you shall bear (as a result of our pact) will most surely be male.” Having finished speaking, Amaterasu first ate the ten-span sword she was wearing, producing the child known as Okinoshima-hime. She then ate the nine-span sword, producing the child known as Takitsu-hime. She then ate the eight-span sword, producing the child known as Takori-hime. In all, there were three goddesses born...⁴²

⁴² *NKBT*, vol. 67, pp. 106-7. Aston renders the passage as follows:

In one writing it is said:—“The Sun-Goddess, aware from the beginning of the fierce and relentless purpose of Sosa no wo no Mikoto, said (to herself) when he ascended: ‘The coming of my brother is not for a good object. He surely means to rob me of my Plain of Heaven.’ So she made manly warlike preparation, girding upon her a ten-span sword, a nine-span sword, and an eight-span sword. Moreover, on her back she slung a quiver, and on her fore-arm drew a dread loud-sounding elbow-pad. In her hand she took a bow and arrow, and going forth to meet him in person, stood on her defence. Then Sosa no wo no Mikoto declared to her, saying:—‘From the beginning I have had no evil intentions. All that I wished was to see thee, my elder sister, face to face. It is only for a brief space that I have come.’ Thereupon the Sun-Goddess, standing opposite to Sosa no wo no Mikoto, swore an oath, saying:—‘ If thy heart is pure, and thou hast no purpose of relentless robbery, the children born to thee will surely be males.’ When she had finished speaking, she ate first the ten-span sword which she had girded on, and produced a child which was called Oki-tsu-shima-hime. Moreover she ate the nine-span sword, and produced a child which was called Tagi-tsu-hime. Moreover she ate the eight-span sword, and produced a child which was called Tagori-hime—in all three female Deities.

See W. G. Aston, *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan*, pp. 34-5, quoted above with original punctuation and spelling.

In this version, Susa no O, who goes on to successfully produce five male deities, is removed from direct genetic affiliation with the Munakata goddesses. Since the swords that would become the seeds of the three goddesses were not his possessions, his parental role is effectively neutralized, except insofar as his presence is what motivated Amaterasu's actions in the first place. This version shares with the *Kujiki* account the presence of three swords, whose decreasing lengths adumbrate the birth order and seniority of each of the three goddesses. It is tempting to read political significance into the effacement of Susa no O, who in myth and legend is consistently associated with non-Yamato regions, including Silla and, most notably, Izumo. I interpret this as an attempt on the part of the compiler or his source to place the three goddesses, and by extension the Munakata clan, exclusively within the Yamato cultural sphere.⁴³ Of course, since the *Nihon shoki* does not specify the origin of the above account, explanations of the *raison d'être* behind its alternative storyline will likely remain in the realm of speculation. Still, it stands as testament to a diverse body of archipelagan mythology within which disparate versions of the same basic legend could exist contemporaneously.

An important question that arises naturally in the light of these alternate versions is whether the Munakata family itself historically regarded one in particular as the “correct” or canonical account. The earliest comprehensive study of the Munakata shrine

⁴³ Ooms notes that the presence of multiple versions of a story in the imperial chronicles may be seen to reflect different factions at court or competing interest groups among the governing elite each endeavoring to get their particular perspective across. See Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics*, p. 7.

(and the Chikuzen region in general) was carried out by the Edo Period scholar Kaibara Ekken (1630-1714). His familiarity with Japanese mythology and its ancient texts was profound. He catalogued and analyzed most, if not all, extant accounts of the three goddesses' birth, including those given in the *Kojiki*, *Kujiki*, and the *Nihon shoki*, as well as those preserved in Munakata family archives. He found that there was no single version accepted throughout history, but that different accounts had prevailed at different times. In his famous *Chikuzen no Kuni Shoku Fudoki* (筑前国続風土記), completed in 1709, Ekken writes:

In the first year of Bun'an (1444), during the reign of retired emperor Go-Hanazono, the Grand Shrine Head Ujitoshi rewrote the history of the three Munakata shrines. In Ujitoshi's words: "The first goddess gathered sea and flame and made the islands. Pledging to stand against foreign enemies until the end of days (末世), she made her abode in an island far from shore in the deep sea, where she remains. Fittingly, this island is called the hallowed island of the deep (奥の御島). It is situated between Japan and Korea, and the goddess who lives there is Tagori-hime. The second goddess made her dwelling in an island nearer to shore. It is the island we today call Ôshima. She is seated a modest distance out to sea; we reverently call this goddess Tagitsu-hime. The third goddess makes her dwelling on the coast, in a place now called Tashima. We reverently call the goddess who lives there Ichikishima-hime."

Today, all the shrine personnel take, without exception, the order of the goddesses' birth to begin with Tagori-hime, followed by Tagitsu-hime, followed by Ichikishima-hime. However, their accounts of where the individual goddesses are enshrined differ from that provided by Ujitoshi.⁴⁴

Regarding the order in which the Munakata Goddesses appeared, Ujitoshi's version accords with the first given in the *Nihon shoki*. Moreover, his explanation of why

⁴⁴ Ekkenkai, ed., *Ekken zenshû*, vol. 4, "Chikuzen no Kuni shoku fudoki," p. 343-4.

Tagori-hime dwells on Okinoshima reveals a frequently encountered theme concerning the island, namely its role, and that of its resident deity, in safeguarding the archipelago from foreign threats. This was an ancient and familiar role for the Munakata goddesses, for the *Nihon shoki* records that when “Emperor” Yûryaku was about to send a punitive expedition against Silla, he ordered the Munakata goddesses to be propitiated; they later appeared to him in a dream and ordered him to abort his plans, which he did.⁴⁵

Ekken’s comment that the current (i.e. seventeenth century) accounts of where the goddesses are enshrined differ from Ujitoshi’s fifteenth century account refers to the fact that when Ekken arrived, the priests at Hetsu Shrine, located in the village of Tashima, apparently regarded their shrine as the seat of the first-born Takori-hime. Regarding this variation in the narratives, Ekken observed:

Today, all the shrine personnel take the order of the goddesses’ birth to begin with Tagori-hime, followed by Tagitsu-hime, followed by Ichikishima-hime; in this, there are no discrepancies. However, their accounts of where the goddesses are enshrined, along with their rank ordering of the Okinoshima and Tashima sites, do show differences. Some claim that from ancient times until the present, Tagori-hime has been the goddess worshipped at Tashima; since Tagori-hime came first, Tashima Shrine is considered by them first among the three sacred sites. They say that the deity enshrined in the coastal shrine is called Tagori-hime (田心姫, ‘Goddess in the Heart of the Fields’) because she is seated in an area close to paddy fields. Tagitsushima-hime is regarded as the second-born. They say that the deity of Ôshima is called Tagitsu-hime (湍津姫, ‘Goddess of the Rushing River’) because she is seated at the edge of the River of Heaven.⁴⁶ Ichikishima-hime is regarded as the third-born. They say that it is

⁴⁵ *NKBT*, vol. 67, pp. 479-80 and note 5. (Yûryaku 9 (464).2 and 3).

⁴⁶ The “River of Heaven” (天の川) refers literally to a small river on the island. That its name is also synonymous with the Milky Way reflects an aspect of local mythology discussed by Ekken during his visit there. In short, the river plays an important role in local *Tanabata* (七夕)

written in the *Nihongi* that Ichikishima is another name for Okinoshima.⁴⁷ The sounds ‘*okitsu*’ and ‘*ichiki*’ are similar.⁴⁸ For these reasons, the goddess who is seated on Okinoshima is taken to be Ichikishima-hime. Other versions are based on the explanations given in the *Kujiki*, *Kojiki*, and shrine head Ujitoshi’s history: they take Okinoshima’s deity to be Tagori-hime and regard the island as being first in importance...

The accounts recorded in the ancient texts and the accounts handed down to the modern age contain conflicting theories and are not uniform. Because the accounts related by the shrine family are each reasonable, one cannot say at this point which is true and which is false. And since this is the case, it is impossible to decide when and where each of the three goddesses was originally enshrined. In any event, because all three goddesses, as children of the Sun Goddess, shared the same womb, they should each be duly venerated. It is for this reason that the Imperial Court grants each goddess the same holy rank.⁴⁹

In his monumental *Kojiki-den*, Motoori Norinaga concluded that, as words, *tagiri* and *tagitsu* both mean something like “a rapidly flowing river,” and philological work on the *Man’yōshū* suggests they originally described water either flowing down a mountain or swirling in whirlpools.⁵⁰ With respect to *tagori*, the most common hypothesis is that it

customs. Two small shrines stand on either bank, one dedicated to the Weaving Maiden and the other to the Herd Boy; these are the focus of annual *Tanabata* festivities, particularly for single men and women hoping to find love. See *Ekken zenshū*, vol. 4 pp. 360-1.

⁴⁷ This derives from a reading of the alternate versions provided in the *Nihon shoki*, particularly the third, which explicitly says that the goddess Okinoshima-hime is also known as Ichikishima-hime. See Aston, p. 39.

⁴⁸ This sentence is awkwardly placed, in that it is not explicitly clear whether Ekken himself is making this judgment, or whether it was related by one of his sources.

⁴⁹ *Ekken zenshū*, vol. 4, p. 344. The Imperial Court could grant deities official rank. Known collectively as *shinkai* (神階) or *shin’i* (神位), these ranks employed the same vocabulary as (but were formally distinct from) the standard system of ranks and offices used for aristocrats and court appointees. The rank of the Munakata goddesses are discussed on p. 58 below.

is simply a derivative pronunciation of *tagiri*, which appears in the Kangen (1303) edition of the *Nihon shoki* as 田霧.⁵¹ Other editions use 田心, and it appears that both orthographies were intended more as phonetic than semantic representations, even though the characters themselves, when spoken as words, still possessed intrinsic meaning. This type of rebus writing is known as “borrowed *kun*” (借訓).⁵² Incidentally, this means that the theory that Tagori-hime’s name meant “in the heart of the fields” probably derived from an overly literal interpretation of what was originally just another phonetic way of representing ‘*tagori*.’ Clues to the meaning of Ichikishima may be found in its alternate pronunciation of Itsukishima. This literally means something like “Veneration Island,” as the noun *itsuki* derives from the nominalization of the continuative form of the verb *itsuku* (齋く), meaning “to perform purifications and venerate deities.” The purported phonological similitude between ‘*ichiki*’ and ‘*okitsu*’ mentioned in the *Chikuzen Shoku Fudoki* is difficult to justify on linguistic grounds. But considering the central role Okinoshima played in ritual practice, the possibility that the name Ichikishima originally

⁵⁰ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 1, pp. 229-30. As simple intransitive verbs, both *tagitsu* and *tagiru* mean “to flow turbulently,” and they are often employed metaphorically to describe turbulent emotions (e.g. *tagitsu kokoro*). See *Kokinshû*, love poems, book 1, nos. 491 and 493.

⁵¹ *NKBT*, vol. 67, p. 559, and *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 1, p. 228.

⁵² Ôkubo Hiroyuki, *Bunpô zenkai Man'yôshû*, p. 24. Another example of borrowed *kun* is provided by 夏櫻, *natsukashi*, “reminiscent (of a past experience).” This is different from “borrowed *on*” writing, i.e. using 由伎 for *yuki*, “snow” or 奈都加之 for *natsukashi*. Borrowed *kun* is one type of a larger class of writing known as *kun-gana* (訓仮名). A brief overview with examples can be found in Matsumura Akira, *Kokugoshi gaisetsu*, pp. 23-25.

meant “Veneration Island” suggests a plausible semantic (as opposed to phonological) connection between the island and the deity.⁵³

Returning to the issue of where each goddess is enshrined, Ekken’s investigations revealed substantial variation not just in the ancient accounts, which might be expected by the complex processes of textual amalgamation, editing, and copying to which ancient works are subject, but also in the contemporary versions espoused by members of the Munakata family. With respect to the accounts given in the *Kojiki*, *Kujiki*, and the *Nihon shoki*, he contends that the first version provided by the *Nihon shoki* is the most compelling.⁵⁴ Ekken argues that Prince Toneri, the compiler of the text, would have been able to correct errors present in the older *Kujiki* and *Kojiki*, and that the presence of multiple versions in the *Nihon shoki* demonstrates an awareness of which story was legitimate and which ones were apocryphal.⁵⁵ He softens this stance considerably with

⁵³ See *Munakata Jinjashi* vol. 1, pp. 231-2.

⁵⁴ *Ekken zenshū*, vol. 4, p. 342.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p. 342. The Edo Period editor of Ekken’s writing, a man named Takeda Sadanao, indicates that Toneri (舎人) is to be read as *Iehito*, which represents a more literal, semantically motivated rendering of the characters. Sadanao may have instructed readers to pronounce the characters this way because the term *toneri* originally denoted an attendant or clerk serving at the Yamato Court. He might have therefore thought it unseemly or confusing to actually call the man Toneri. Sadanao’s suggestion is not unreasonable in light of other examples of historical naming. For instance, the fourteenth century diary *Takemuki ga ki* (竹向きが記) was written by a noblewoman usually known to history as Hino Meishi (名子), an appellation by which she would probably never have been verbally addressed. Hence, some scholars posit that she may have been called Takemuki, in reference to her place of residence, or Nako, which reflects the semantically grounded *kun* pronunciation of the characters 名子. With respect to the compiler of the *Nihon shoki*, modern scholars almost invariably call him Prince Toneri, but Sadanao’s suggestion of *Iehito*, which does sound more appropriate for a personal name (as opposed to a title), merits consideration. The possibility that Hino Meishi was called Takemuki is considered in Hitomi

respect to the conflicting versions offered by the priests of the Munakata Shrine, concluding that it is simply not possible to determine which among them is the most accurate. There is a striking contrast between the scholarly confidence with which he advocates for the veracity of the *Nihon shoki* over the *Kujiki* and *Kojiki*, and the soft, conciliatory tone he adopts towards the inconsistencies inherent in the private family accounts. One might imagine that, as a scholar, Ekken felt free to probe and analyze classical texts that, by his lifetime, had become part of a shared academic domain, but was more reticent to subject private histories to rigorous critical evaluation. Of course, it is equally possible that after examining the family accounts, he decided with exasperation that the attempt to settle on a single, canonical version of the myth was simply a fruitless and unnecessary endeavor.

Whatever the case, the various versions of Munakata mythohistory that Ekken studied were not confined to the pre-modern or early modern eras. Throughout the Meiji, Taisho, and early Showa periods, the story of the Munakata goddesses showed much the same heterogeneity that it had before. It was not until 1957 that shrine authorities decided to settle the matter once and for all. From the outset, they rejected the notion of trying to judge the relative merits of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* and relied instead on a comprehensive analysis of all recorded Munakata traditions, focusing particularly on

Tomomura, "Re-envisioning Women in the Post-Kamakura Age," in Jeffery P. Mass, ed., *The Origins of Japan's Medieval World: Courtiers, Clerics, Warriors, and Peasants in the Fourteenth Century*, pp. 139 and 410, note 4. The possibility that Meishi might have been addressed as Nako is mentioned in Donald Keene, *Seeds in the Heart*, p. 848.

those practiced during and after the medieval era.⁵⁶ Their conclusions led to the currently accepted narrative of the goddesses' birth order and location of enshrinement: Tagori-hime (Okitsu Shrine), followed by Tagitsu-hime (Nakatsu Shrine), followed by Ichikishima-hime (Hetsu Shrine). Orthographically, the representations 田心姫神, 湍津姫神, and 市杵島姫神 were settled upon. This schema accords with the primary version in the *Nihon shoki*, as well as with accounts in the *Montoku jitsuroku* and *Sandai jitsuroku*, and it is thought to be the most broadly representative of the shrine's religious history.⁵⁷ Yet for all their diversity, accounts treating the Munakata goddesses' are not the only areas of family history to be the subject of philological inquiry. The origins, meaning, and orthographic development of the very name *Munakata* have justifiably earned similar attention. Exploring the Munakata name not only sheds light on the possible roots of the clan itself, but it also helps elucidate social developments within the family hierarchy.

⁵⁶ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 1, p. 262.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 262-3. The *Montoku Tennô jitsuroku* and *Sandai jitsuroku* are the fifth and sixth officially commissioned national histories of Japan. The former was completed in 879 and the latter in 901; together, they span thirty-seven years, from 850 to 887.

Geography, Orthography: The Meaning of Munakata

The mythology of the Munakata family is inexorably grounded in the geography of the Tsukushi region. According to one famous account given in the *Chikuzen Fudoki*, the name Munakata is said to have originated in connection with the descent to earth of the three Munakata goddesses:

When the Great Munakata Goddesses had descended from Heaven and were inhabiting Mount Sakito, they took the Blue Luxuriant Jewel and made it the sacred treasure of Okitsu Shrine. They then took the Eight Foot Luxuriant Purple Jewel and made it the sacred treasure of Nakatsu Shrine. They then took the Yata Mirror and made it the sacred treasure of Hetsu Shrine. With these three treasures, they fashioned holy effigies (體之形, *mi no kata*), placed them in the three shrines, and then hid themselves away. For this reason, this District was called *minokata* (身形, “shape of the body”). Later, people changed the name to *munakata* (宗像).⁵⁸

Kaibara Ekken agrees with this scenario, arguing along phonological lines that the pronunciation of ‘*mino*’ in ancient times would correspond closely to the sound ‘*muna*’ in later ages.⁵⁹ Although Ekken did not have access to the full array of tools available to modern linguists, his insight on this point would prove trenchant. It is thought by many

⁵⁸ *NKBT*, vol. 2, p. 506. The *Chikuzen Fudoki* is a “lost text” (逸文), meaning that it has not survived intact as an independent work, but has been reconstructed from fragments that survive in other sources. Note that the “holy effigies” mentioned here are not anthropomorphous; while small statues do often serve as “god-bodies” (*shintai*, 神体), any object imbued with a divine presence can, in principle, be a stand-in (*mishirushi*, 表) for a deity. See *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, pp. 275-8

⁵⁹ *Ekken zenshū*, vol. 4, p. 339.

modern scholars that old Japanese once supported an eight vowel system, as opposed to the five vowel system of classical and modern Japanese.⁶⁰ In the phrase *mi no kata*, *no* is a case particle that serves to subordinate *kata*, ‘shape’ to *mi*, ‘body,’ just as it would in the modern language. In ancient and early classical times, however, this particle was not pronounced as it is today. Textual evidence from the Nara Period suggests that phonological distinctions were made between two types of *i*, *e*, and *o*, thereby adding three more vowel sounds to the standard *a i u e o* arrangement. Traditionally, the two vowel types have been given the classifications *kôru* (甲類) and *otsuru* (乙類), often rendered in English as type-A and type-B, respectively.⁶¹ The actual ancient pronunciations of type-A vowels and type-B vowels are not known, but one popular hypothesis, due to the linguist Ôno Susumu, posits that the type-B vowels, which he denotes as *ĩ*, *ĕ*, and *ö*, were centralized versions of *i*, *e*, and *o*.⁶²

As it happens, both the final *o* in the case particle *no* and the final *i* in the word *mi* (身, body) were type-B vowels. If one assumes the phonological values proposed in Ôno’s eight vowel hypothesis to be correct, the more centralized pronunciation of the particle *no* would be something nearer to ‘nuh’ than to ‘noh,’ and *mi* would sound

⁶⁰ See Ôno Susumu, *Nihongo no sekai*, vol. 1, “Nihongo no seiritu,” esp. pp. 147-50, and Masayoshi Shibatani, *The Languages of Japan*, p. 132.

⁶¹ Shibatani, pp. 131-139.

⁶² Ibid. p. 132. The term “central” refers to the place of articulation within the mouth; a sound like [i], as in *see*, *eat*, etc., would be classified as a front vowel, while the sound [o], as in *no*, *row*, etc., would be a back vowel. Examples of central vowels are provided by the words *blood*, *putt*, and *cuff*; these would typically be denoted by the phonetic symbol [ʌ]. See George Yule, *The Study of Language* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 30-39.

something like ‘mih’ (as in the word ‘miss’) instead of the usual ‘mee.’ By supposing that *minokata* was, in ancient times, pronounced ‘mih-nuh-kata,’ the eventual transition to *munakata* becomes rather less jarring because the phonological evolution is from central vowels to back vowels, instead of from front vowels to back vowels. Of course, any suggestion of exactly what type-A and type-B vowels really sounded like nearly 1500 years ago is highly speculative. Still, it is worth noting that Kaibara Ekken’s original assertion of a phonological connection between the ancient *minokata* and the classical/modern *munakata* may be plausibly supported by Ono’s hypothesis regarding the phonetic values of type-A and type-B vowels.

Returning to the issue of orthography, historical sources attest to at least five distinct ways of writing the name *munakata*. The earliest writings all use corporeal imagery: in the *Kojiki*, the name appears as 胸形, meaning “shape of the chest,” and in the *Nihon shoki*, it is rendered as 胸肩, “chest and shoulder.” In light of the *Chikuzen Fudoki* account, the corporeal imagery of these orthographies may be seen as evidence that the Munakata name has its roots in a mythological narrative centering on the bodies of deities and/or their effigial representations. Another theory, however, posits that the name *munakata* derives from the physical landscape along the coast of Munakata District. At ebb tide, the area between Kô no Minato and the Kanezaki promontory is exposed as a mud flat. From this, it is suggested that the place was called *munakata*

(空潟 or 沼無潟), meaning something like “empty tidal flat” or “dry lagoon.”⁶³ This view, originally proposed by the Meiji-era scholar Fukumoto Makoto, is based on physical observation and educated guesswork.⁶⁴ And while it may plausibly account for the origin of *munakata* as a spoken word, neither 空潟 nor 沼無潟 is attested to in writing, meaning that it was probably never used to represent the *name* Munakata. If Fukumoto’s hypothesis is true, it would imply that somewhere in the distant (i.e. pre-*Kojiki*) past, Munakata chieftains and/or Yamato chroniclers began representing the name Munakata in writing with kanji whose intrinsic meaning was unrelated to the original definition of the word *munakata*.

A more recent theory, proposed by the noted anthropologist Kanaseki Takeo is that the name derives from the practice of tattooing a fish scale-like pattern on the upper chest, which was apparently common among the coastal ancestors of the Munakata clan.⁶⁵ He regards the orthography found in the *Kojiki* as the oldest, and if his hypothesis is correct, it should be understood to mean something like “chest pattern.” In this case, the kanji used to write the name Munakata in the oldest surviving records do reflect the actual original meaning of the word *munakata*.

⁶³ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 1, pp. 33 and 39.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 39. Fukumoto himself seems certain that the *kata* in *munakata* is 潟, but is openly less sure about where the *mu* and *na* come from.

⁶⁵ Mori Kôichi, “Rettô no chiiki bunka,” *Nihon no kodai*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 1986), p. 40-41.

By the eighth and ninth centuries, records begin to show the name Munakata written with other, non-corporeally oriented orthographies. In a local population register for the Chikuzen village of Kawabe, the name appears as 宗形,⁶⁶ and in the tenth century *Engi Shiki*, the characters 宗像 are used.⁶⁷ The encyclopedic dictionary known as the *Wamyôshô*, compiled in the 930s, also gives 宗像, supplemented by the *man'yôgana* rendition 牟奈加多 to guide readers' pronunciation.⁶⁸ Interestingly, while the *Wamyôshô* suggests the same pronunciation for 宗像 as that accepted today, other texts, including some from as late as the eighteenth century, pronounce the name as Munekata.⁶⁹ This variation is supported by broader Japanese phonetic conventions, which allow many characters, including both 宗 and 胸, to be read as either *mune* or *muna*, depending on circumstance and collocational preference.⁷⁰ By the mid Heian Period, the orthographies

⁶⁶ Taihō 2 (702) Chikuzen no Kuni, Shima no Kōri, Kawabe no Sato koseki (*Dai Nippon komonjo*, vol. 1, pp. 124-5).

⁶⁷ Koji Ruien Kankōkai, ed., *Koji Ruien*, pp. 932-33.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* The dictionary is also commonly known by its full name, *Wamyô Ruijishō*.

⁶⁹ This is the pronunciation given in the *Gunmeikō* (郡名考), written by the Tokugawa Period scholar Aoki Kon'yō (1698-1769). Kon'yō is generally thought to have been born in Nihonbashi, in the city of Edo, though some accounts place his birth in Omi or Ise. He studied Confucian philosophy under Ito Togai at the Kogidō academy in Kyoto and later went on to achieve repute in the field of "practical learning" (*jitsugaku*). A thinker of great breadth, among his most famous contributions is the successful advocacy of sweet potato cultivation as a means to forestall famine and enrich the food supply. With regards to Kon'yō's pronunciation of 宗像 as *munekata*, it is tempting to posit that the famous philological bent of the Kogidō inspired him to seek out the early orthographies (胸形 and 胸肩), to whose corporeal imagery the reading of *munekata* does more justice than *munakata*. See Kokushi Daijiten Inkai, ed., *Kokushi daijiten*, Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1979, vol. 1, p. 39, and Conrad Totman, *Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), p. 313.

preserved in the *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki* had become moribund, and 宗像 was becoming increasingly standardized. Interestingly, however, 宗形 continued to be used in personal names, even into the medieval period. A curious division of labor developed whereby 宗像 was used when referring to the shrine and 宗形 was employed to write individual names.⁷¹ In 1084, for example, an official document reports that Munakata Ujimichi (宗形氏道), senior sixth rank, lower grade, was appointed shrine head of the Munakata Grand Shrine (宗像大社).⁷² By the mid Kamakura Period (1192-1333), the distinction between these two orthographies had become even more nuanced: shrine heads and noted family leaders would use 宗像 when writing their names, while all other lower-ranking members of the family used 宗形.⁷³ In this way, the orthography was being used to convey socially meaningful information about the position of individual family members.

It is difficult to say with certainty how or why this practice came about, though it does appear to have developed in the early medieval period.⁷⁴ One possibility is that

⁷⁰ As a stand-alone word, 胸 is generally pronounced *mune*, but in certain compounds it should be read as *muna*, such as 胸算 (*munazan* “mental arithmetic”). The same phenomenon occurs with *ame* (雨, “rain”), which becomes *ama* in compounds like 雨戸 (*amado* “rain shutter”).

⁷¹ During and after the Heian era, the name of the shrine is always written with 宗像. This is the case regardless of the type of text in which reference to the Munakata Shrine is made: 宗像 appears in official documents from the Dajōkan (Department of State), the courtier diary *Chūyūki*, and three buried sutra cylinders (經筒). The only exception comes from the very early in the period (the first year in fact), when the Munakata Shrine appears as 宗形神社 in the *Ruijū kokushi*. See *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 1, pp. 191-4 for a detailed overview of the use and distributional pattern of the various Munakata orthographies.

⁷² See Ōtoku 1 (1084).7.27 Dajōkanfu (*DTS* vol. 5, p. 372).

⁷³ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 1, p. 39, note 5.

shrine heads and family elites were seen to represent the entire shrine institution, which by the early medieval era had grown to become a large economic enterprise with ties to the aristocracy, warrior society, and even wealthy Chinese merchants. Because the name of the shrine itself had long been written with the characters 宗像, I surmise that family leaders adopted this orthography to signify their personal institutional involvement with the Munakata enterprise, in contradistinction to lower-ranking Munakata who were part of the family but not part of its structure of authority.

In sum, the Munakata name demonstrates remarkable longevity and phonetic continuity, minor variations in pronunciation (e.g. *munekata*) notwithstanding. In terms of orthography, the broadest identifiable trend is from the use of kanji imbued with strongly corporeal imagery to the use of more abstract characters. Yet while the foregoing textual evidence suggests an orthographic progression beginning with 胸形 and ultimately leading to 宗像, it should not be assumed that this process was governed by any particular “evolutionary” principle, for prior to the maturation of the Japanese state and the spread of regularized record keeping, multiple orthographic representations of the Munakata name existed contemporaneously, and the most ancient texts show no particular preference for one over the other.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 39.

⁷⁵ This is exemplified by the *Nihon shoki*, which uses no less than four combinations of characters to write the name Munakata. These are 胸形, 胸肩, 胸方, and 方.

The Munakata in the Archaeological Record: Okinoshima and *Kofun* Tumuli

Sixty kilometers off the northwest coast of Kyushu lies one of the richest and most important sites in Japanese religious history. Beginning in the early centuries C.E., Okinoshima served as a place of worship and ritual, a role that it would play for the next six hundred years. Among such sites in the region, Okinoshima was unsurpassed in sacredness and majesty. Known locally as *oiwazu-sama*, “that which is not spoken of,” it commanded fear and respect from local mariners even into early modern times. Ekken noted that while the rich waters off Okinoshima drew fishermen from nearby, those from other locales were not permitted to fish near its sacred precincts.⁷⁶ Jagged rocky outcrops make landing a boat perilous; only the southern tip affords a reasonably gentle slope down to the sea, and it is here that mooring facilities have been constructed. The entire island has proven to be an archaeological treasure trove, yielding a vast quantity of domestic and foreign wares. The sheer volume, value, and diversity of the objects found there has led scholars to christen Okinoshima with the auspicious title *Umi no Shôsôin* (“the Shôsôin of the Sea”), in reference to the famous repository of the same name in Nara. Historically, entrance onto the island was tightly controlled, and Munakata shrine regulations prohibited the removal of its artifacts. Today, the Munakata Shrine on Okinoshima is still operational, and the island is still treated with great reverence.

⁷⁶ *Ekken zenshû*, vol. 4, p. 365.

Scholars typically categorize the ancient observances conducted on Okinoshima according to the manner and location of their performance. Four distinct chronological periods have been identified, beginning in the fourth century and ending in the ninth, which each typify a particular method of ritual performance. During the first phase (late 4th ~ 5th centuries), rituals were generally performed on top of enormous rocks.⁷⁷ An altar dating from the end of the fourth century stands atop one such crag and commands panoramic views of the sea. During the second phase (6th ~ 7th centuries), the preferred locations were more often in the shadow of large rocks rather than on top of them, and during the short third phase (late 7th ~ early 8th centuries), some rituals were being performed out in the open.⁷⁸ This shift towards holding observances under open sky would be completed by the fourth and final stage of activity, which spans the late eighth and ninth centuries.⁷⁹ Although Okinoshima would continue to serve as a sacred site for the Munakata Shrine, large-scale ritual practice on the island seems to have abated by the early Heian Period. The reasons behind this development will be explored on pages 38-40 below.

As of 2008, 23 separate sites containing artifacts had been identified.⁸⁰ The artifacts found at site no. 17 date from the earliest period of large-scale observance and

⁷⁷ Masaki Akira, *Munakata Taisha: kodai saishi no genfûkei*, p. 38.

⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 38.

⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 39.

include 21 mirrors of varying design, along with *kudatama* and *magatama* made of jade, jasper, or talc.⁸¹ Seven iron swords, three daggers, and two *warabite* short swords have also been discovered from this era, though all were found in fragments.⁸² The mirrors have garnered especially close attention because they are all of Japanese manufacture, made in imitation of contemporary Chinese mirrors.⁸³ Their dense concentration at site no. 17 is rivaled only by the caches found in the immense tombs of Yamato elites, making Okinoshima unique among non-funerary locations. Many are of identical design to those found in the Kinai area, and it is widely believed that these in fact originated in the Kinai and were brought to Okinoshima as offerings or gifts.⁸⁴ This scenario accords nicely with broader practices of Wa paramounts observed during the fifth century. As described in the introduction, kings from the coalescent core cultivated alliances with local chieftains through gift giving and the coordination of ritual practice; no single location anywhere on the archipelago testifies to this with more clarity than Okinoshima.

⁸⁰ Masaki, pp. 42-3. Sites 14 and 20 have been shown to contain overlapping artifacts from the same period and may be regarded as one single ceremonial site. However Akira maintains the formal distinction between sites 14 and 20 because to do otherwise would engender confusion in a numbering system that, by now, has become quite standard.

⁸¹ Ibid. *Kudatama* (管玉) and *magatama* (勾玉) were, respectively, cylindrical and comma-shaped jewels.

⁸² Ibid, p. 42. The *warabite* sword (蕨手刀子, “young bracken frond sword”) was so named because the design of its hilt resembled a bracken leaf. Note here that the item was a short sword, in contrast to the larger *warabite no tachi* (蕨手太刀) of the same basic design.

⁸³ These are literally termed “imitation mirrors,” in juxtaposition to imported mirrors. Masaki, p. 43, provides a list of the types of mirrors (eight in all) found at site no. 17.

⁸⁴ Kawazoe Shôji, “Munakata-shi no taigai bôeki to Shikanoshima no ama,” p. 280.

According to Piggott, the island may have been the first recipient of substantial offerings from the coalescent core,⁸⁵ and the discoveries made there provide tangible evidence of the respect accorded to the Munakata goddesses in the Yamato chronicles. They demonstrate the process of networking that was occurring between regional clans and the emergent polity centered around the Osaka Plain: by venerating the Munakata goddesses with expensive and symbolically meaningful objects, Kinai leaders of the late fourth and fifth centuries strengthened ties with the Munakata, who in turn solidified their prestige and local authority through their association with the coalescent core.

During the second phase of observance on Okinoshima, the number of imported items used as offerings increased noticeably. Such items include arms and armor, earthenware, and metal plates, but the most significant finds from this period are two small fragments of cut glass whose convex shape suggests they were once part of a bowl.⁸⁶ Their distinctive design accords precisely with glass produced in the Giran region of Iran during the Sassanid Dynasty; that such a valuable item would come to be used as an offering on Okinoshima strongly attests to the island's continuing importance as a center of ritual performance.⁸⁷ The finds from this era are reflective of broader trends during the sixth century: All across the archipelago, items such as gold ornaments and equestrian gear began to replace the bronze swords and *magatama* used as prestige

⁸⁵ Piggott, *Emergence*, p. 61.

⁸⁶ Masaki, pp. 61 and 65.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 65.

goods in earlier times.⁸⁸ Yet there is a curious gap in Okinoshima's archaeological record during this period. Artifacts dating from the latter half of the sixth century through the first half of the seventh have yet to be discovered, and while it may be that such discoveries will be made in the future, current information makes clear that this century-long span witnessed a perplexing drop in propitiatory offerings.⁸⁹ So far, this nadir has yet to be explained.⁹⁰

During the mid seventh century, an interesting trend emerged towards using miniaturized items and replicas of everyday objects as offerings. Figurines of people, along with miniature knives, spearheads, and axes have been unearthed, as have a large number of objects associated with textile weaving, such as miniature looms and spindles.⁹¹ Although it would seem that such offerings, being scaled-down replicas of functional goods, are of less putative value than those used in earlier times, this is not necessarily the case. The very fact that they were miniature replicas, and thus unsuited to human use, underscores their significance as purely ritual items produced for no other purpose than to be used as religious offerings.⁹² The practice of using objects of high

⁸⁸ Piggott, *Emergence*, p. 70.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 63.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 63.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 67-8.

⁹² Oda Fujio, "Okinoshima saishi iseki no jidai to sono saishi keitai" in Munakata Jinka Fukkô Kiseikai, ed., *Munakata Okinoshima* (Tokyo: Munakata Jinka Fukkô Kiseikai, 1979), quoted in Masaki, p. 68.

market value would, however, make brief resurgence in the third period of major ritual observance. In the eighth century, precious objects from Tang China appear as offerings; most notable among them are beautiful multicolored ceramics commonly referred to as *Tô no Sansai* (唐三彩).⁹³ Excavation site no. 5, which contains artifacts from this time, has also yielded a miniature five-stringed zither made of bronze, as well as bronze sculptures of dragon heads that are thought to have originally been produced in the short-lived sixth century Chinese kingdom of Eastern Wei.⁹⁴

After the early eighth century, however, such high-value goods would never be seen again on Okinoshima. The fourth stage of ritual performance is characterized by enormous numbers of comparatively low-value items, including cups, lids, bowls, pots, jars of various sorts, and, on at least one occasion, domestic copper coins.⁹⁵ Some of the pottery from this era is found only on Okinoshima and the coast of Munakata District, suggesting that it was produced in local kilns before being transported to the island.⁹⁶ The amount of material found from this period is so high that, as of 2008, only about half had been thoroughly catalogued and studied.⁹⁷ Some objects of higher value are also found, such as small octagonal mirrors (八稜鏡) and domestic ceramics known as *Nara Sansai*

⁹³ See Miya Mutsuo, ed., *Umi no Shôsôin Okinoshima*, pp. 179-83.

⁹⁴ Masaki, p. 71. Pages 72-76 give a detailed treatment of the dragon heads and bronze zither.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 79.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 78.

(奈良三彩), but the departure from past eras is nonetheless unmistakable. Crucially, no imported items whatsoever are found from this period.⁹⁸ By the turn of the tenth century, the era of large-scale ritual observance on Okinoshima was over for good.

The reason why major ritual practice on Okinoshima was abandoned is still being debated. The most popular theory ascribes this shift primarily to Japan's abandonment of official missions to China: with delegations no longer being dispatched, the need to undertake elaborate and expensive rituals designed to ensure safe voyages was eliminated.⁹⁹ This view is supported by the fact that the overriding purpose of ritual observances conducted on Okinoshima between the seventh and ninth centuries was, without question, to ensure safety at sea.¹⁰⁰ However I believe that the cessation of Tang embassies was not the sole factor responsible for the ninth century decline of major ritual observance on the island. At this very time, the Munakata Shrine was flourishing within the rubric of Japan's newly-routinized imperial polity; as will be touched upon in chapter two, the Munakata goddesses, and by extension the shrine establishment itself, rose rapidly in rank (神位) throughout the ninth century. By this time, the social and political order on the archipelago had undergone a process of ideological configuration and

⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 80.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 81. Masaki agrees with this theory, which was first advanced by Dr. Okazaki Satoshi 岡崎敬 in "Ritsuryō jidai ni okeru Munakata Taisha to Okinoshima," in Munakata Jinja Fukkō Kiseikai, ed., *Munakata Okinoshima* (Tokyo: Munakata Jinja Fukkō Kiseikai, 1979).

¹⁰⁰ Evidence for this comes in the form of *funagata*, small boat-shaped offerings typically carved out of stone, wood, or talc. See Ueda Masaaki, *Nihon no rekishi*, vol. 2, "Taiō no seiki," pp. 218-19.

administrative restructuring based upon Chinese principles of law and governance.¹⁰¹

Prior to this process, ritual observance on Okinoshima had served to cement ties between the Munakata and the Kinai kings, but by the late eighth and early ninth centuries, different mechanisms, such as ceremonial ranks and hereditary appointments to local posts, were functioning in a similar way.

Moreover, as the Munakata family's formal authority over local administration expanded, Hetsu Shrine and its environs became a family headquarters of sorts. By the year 781, all three goddesses were being collectively venerated (合祀) there,¹⁰² and throughout the Heian Period, offerings made to the Munakata Shrine by the Imperial Court or other influential patrons went predominantly to Hetsu. In sum, both the changed structure of prestige relations and the increased spiritual centrality of Hetsu Shrine combined to obviate the need to propitiate the Munakata deities on Okinoshima. The cessation of embassies to Tang China was thus only one factor among several that contributed to the island's decline as a center of grand ritual performance.

¹⁰¹ Piggott, *Emergence*, p. 166.

¹⁰² *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 1, p. 128.

The Upper Takamiya and Miyaji-dake Tombs

Around the end of the third century C.E., large, mounded tombs known as *kofun* began to be constructed, first in the Kansai region, and then elsewhere on the archipelago.¹⁰³ Underneath the tumuli were burial chambers in which the body of the deceased, along with appropriate grave goods, would be placed. The design of these burial chambers could be of two broad types: vertical rock chambers, commonly seen in the early and mid Kofun period, and horizontal rock chambers, which appeared later.¹⁰⁴ Tombs are found in large numbers throughout Munakata District; several dozen of these are covered by tumuli, the majority of which are simple round mounds (*enpun*)¹⁰⁵ Their age of construction varies, but most date from the Kofun Period proper (300-700 C.E). Significantly, every tumulus in Munakata District is either of the plain round or round keyhole design. It is thought that these designs reflected conscious participation in the

¹⁰³ The most famous tumuli have a shape reminiscent of a keyhole, being composed of one round mound and one tapered rectangular mound, but older *kofun* consisting of a square mound connected to a tapered rectangular mound are also found. It is typically thought that the gradual diffusion of *kofun* from the Kansai area outward reflects the contemporaneous expansion of a polity whose locus of power was on or around the Nara Plain. See Penelope Mason, *A History of Japanese Art*, Adams, 1993, pp. 23-24 for a general overview. Joan R. Piggott, "Sacral Kingship and Confederacy in Early Izumo," pp. 53-56, gives detailed information regarding tomb design and the political significance of tomb construction in Izumo.

¹⁰⁴ The horizontal rock chambers (横穴式石室) resembled a kind of crypt and were frequently dug into hillsides (with the hill functioning as the tumulus). They had an entrance called a *senmon* (羨門), followed by a small hallway called a *sendo* (羨道), which lead back into the actual burial chamber, known as the *genshitsu* (玄室).

¹⁰⁵ For a comprehensive list of tombs in Munakata District, along with their design type and the items recovered from them, see *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 1, pp. 25-28.

network of cultural production centered on the Yamato Plain.¹⁰⁶ As will be shown below, the grave goods uncovered in two Munakata *kofun*, like the offerings found in Okinoshima, attest vividly to the clan's participation in the Yamato system of prestige relations.

In 1926, archaeologists carried out a detailed survey of a tomb known as Upper Takamiya. Upper Takamiya dates from the early or mid fifth century and, like Hetsu Shrine, is located in the village of Tashima. The hill that forms the tumulus is part of a holy site known as Mount Munakata, where the Munakata goddesses are said to have descended to Earth; on a clear day, it affords vistas of Ôshima and even Okinoshima.¹⁰⁷ The grave goods recovered from Upper Takamiya are consistent with those found across the archipelago during the fifth century. They include one Japanese mirror made in the Chinese style; six bronze arrowheads; 20 *magatama*, including one carved of jade; 11 *kudatama*; two *warabite* short swords; two daggers; and 40 iron arrowheads.¹⁰⁸ Unfortunately, the identity of the tomb's occupant is not known, but the type and number

¹⁰⁶ See Piggott, *Emergence*, pp. 28-36. In "Sacral Kingship in Early Izumo," Joan Piggott shows how chieftains in the eastern part of Izumo articulated their independence from the Yamato cultural orbit through the act of constructing square keyhole tombs.

¹⁰⁷ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 1, p. 17. The symbolic importance of Mount Munakata is no doubt augmented by the fact that essentially all territory occupied by the early Munakata clan can be surveyed from its summit.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* p. 17. Photos of some of these items are given on plate 4 in the back matter (unfortunately, the photographic plates are not paginated).

of grave goods indicate that it was someone of great importance to the early Munakata clan,¹⁰⁹ and an active member in the cultural life of the archipelago.

Approximately six kilometers southwest of Upper Takimiya, near the city of Fukutsu, is another Munakata tomb known as Miyaji-dake. Built about two centuries after Upper Takimiya, during the twilight of the Kofun Period, Miyaji-dake clearly represents a different era, both in architectural design and in the type of grave goods it contained. The hillock into which it is built is circular in shape and has a diameter of about 34 meters.¹¹⁰ The horizontal stone burial chamber is 22 meters long, making it one of the longest uncovered to date anywhere in Japan.¹¹¹ Among the rocks used to construct the interior chamber, some are nearly five meters high and four meters wide,¹¹² and although the exterior mound is far smaller than some found elsewhere on Kyushu, the tomb's interior design makes it a fitting architectural coda to the tumulus period. The burial chamber of Miyaji-dake is unlike those generally found in tombs of comparable size, as there is no separation between the room where the body was placed and the corridor that leads to it from the entrance.¹¹³ The identity of the occupant of Miyaji-dake

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. pp. 17-18.

¹¹⁰ Mori, *Nihon no kodai*, p. 48.

¹¹¹ Ibid. p. 48. For comparison with the dimensions of other tombs, see J. Edward Kidder, "The Fujinoki Tomb and its Grave Goods," p. 63. Kidder lists Miyaji-dake as having the second longest interior of any known tomb, exceeded only by Mise-maruyama, whose total length is estimated to be 25.2 meters.

¹¹² *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 1, p. 20.

is not known for certain, but the most widely encountered theory is that it was Munakata Tokuzen 徳善, (fl. 674), a family chief whose daughter Amako became a consort of Emperor Tenmu and gave birth to the renowned Prince Takechi.¹¹⁴ Tokuzen is the earliest individual Munakata to appear by name in the extant historical record,¹¹⁵ and his close ties to Japan's ruling elite cast him as an appropriate candidate for burial in a large, richly accoutered tomb. Some scholars, however, believe that Miyaji-dake was constructed one generation before Tokuzen and thus held a previous chieftain.¹¹⁶

The grave goods found inside are unparalleled in value among those found in Munakata tombs. They include horse trappings such as saddle fittings, gilded bronze “pot stirrups,” and a decorative bit; two *kabutsuchi* swords; and rare imported glass plates.¹¹⁷ Altogether about three hundred artifacts have been recovered from Miyaji-

¹¹³ Kidder, “The Fujinoki Tomb and its Grave Goods,” p. 63. The entrance to Miyaji-dake was sealed for more than a millennium, before being opened by landslide in 1716; in 1747, it was ceremoniously sealed once again with a large stone. See *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 1, p. 645.

¹¹⁴ Prince Takechi served with distinction in the Jinshin War of 672 and later became prime minister (*dajō daijin*). As recounted in the *Kaifūsō*, his death in 696 engendered bickering among the nobles that was only resolved when Prince Kadono spoke up and, appealing to law, advocated for paternal (as opposed to fraternal) succession. Three poems by Prince Takechi are included in the *Man'yōshū* (nos. 156, 157, and 158). All treat Takechi's half sister Princess Tōchi, and although the poems are listed as having been composed “on the occasion of her death” (葬時), it is thought that the first was written before she died, the second when she died, and the third after her funeral. It is also thought that Prince Takechi and Princess Tōchi may have become lovers following the death of Emperor Kōbun, whom Tōchi served as a consort. See Omodaka Hisakata, *Man'yōshū Chūshaku*, vol. 2, pp. 225-40, and *NKBT*, vol. 69, pp. 81-2.

¹¹⁵ He appears in the Tenmu chapter of the *Nihon shoki*. See *NKBT*, vol. 68, p. 410.

¹¹⁶ Mori Kōichi, “Rettō no chiiki bunka,” *Nihon no kodai*, vol. 2, p. 48.

dake.¹¹⁸ The composition of the tomb's grave goods precisely follows the trend observed earlier for ritual offerings on Okinoshima. Unlike the older Upper Takamiya tomb, Miyaji-dake harbors a high proportion of equestrian objects, and the *magatama* and *kudatama* pieces that were so ubiquitous in earlier times have been replaced by imported glass items and objects containing precious metals.

By the time Tokuzen died, the very nature of Yamato kingship was changing. Emperor Tenmu had embarked on an ambitious program of refiguring the old prestige order, creating new titles and reinterpreting old ones.¹¹⁹ In his new system of eight ranks (*yakusa no kabane*, 八色姓), the highest was *mahito* (真人), followed by *ason* or *asomi* (朝臣).¹²⁰ In 685, the Munakata were granted the title of *ason*, which was relatively rare for a family of “provincial” elites.¹²¹ In the construction of his kingship, Tenmu articulated an unprecedented degree of universality, frequently referring not just to royals in his edicts but to “commoners” as well. He recruited local chieftains from across the

¹¹⁷ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 1, pp. 20 and 27. The stirrups discovered at Miyaji-dake are known as “pot stirrups” (*tsubo-abumi*, 壺鐙) because they completely enclose the rider's feet. The sword is of a kind known as *kabutsuchi no tachi* (頭椎太刀, 頭槌太刀), meaning “hammer pommel sword,” so called because its pommel was enlarged and vaguely resembled a hammer. Functionally speaking, such a design shifted the center of gravity towards the handle, enabling the user to wield the sword more efficiently in one hand. The glass plates have garnered especially close attention, for while most goods found in Munakata tombs are thought to have passed through the hands of Yamato elites, this particular glass is thought by some scholars to have been obtained from overseas directly by the Munakata. See Mori, *Nihon no Kodai*, vol. 2, p. 49.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹¹⁹ Piggott, *Emergence*, p. 138.

¹²⁰ Kagamiyama Takeshi and Tamura Enchô, eds., *Kodai no Nihon*, vol. 3, “Kyûshû,” p. 306.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* p. 306; *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 404.

archipelago, making over 200 grants of titles to allies from 177 different families, and his martial charisma helped build the edifice of divine kingship that would come to characterize the office and persona of the *tennô*, “Emperor.”¹²² For the Munakata family, the age of Tenmu and Tokuzen marked the beginning of heightened titular integration into the Yamato regime; in the ensuing decades, this would be formalized under the most sophisticated ideological rubric yet seen on the archipelago.

¹²² Piggott, *Emergence*, pp. 138 and 164. Tenmu is often cited as the first Japanese monarch to use the title *tennô*, though the practice may have developed earlier and would not become widespread until Jitô’s reign. Piggott opts for the translation “heavenly sovereign” over “emperor,” contending that Japanese kingship was substantially dissimilar from that in China, its closest supposed parallel, and that political conditions on the archipelago preclude pre-modern Japanese polities from being described as empires. In particular, according to Piggott, unlike Rome, Persia, or China, the early Japanese state was not founded on conquest and martial paramountcy. Batten (*Gateway*, pp. 147-8, note 78) disagrees on these points, arguing that Japanese paramounts *tried* to emulate patterns of Chinese kingship, and that eighth-century Japan was, in fact, a “multiethnic state based on conquest” (e.g. of the Hayato in Kyushu and the Emishi in Honshu).

CHAPTER III

THE MUNAKATA IN THE *RITSURYÔ* AGE

In the Year 701, a legal code known as the *Taihô Ritsuryô* was promulgated under the direction of Emperor Monmu.¹²³ Modeled largely on Tang law, the *Taihô Ritsuryô* represented the culmination of a century-long period of experimentation with Chinese social and legal thought that had begun during the reign of Suiko. More than simply an exercise in cultural borrowing, the *ritsuryô* process was a carefully calculated response to a host of pressures operating on Yamato elites during the seventh century. In the international arena, the rise of the Tang Dynasty caused a geopolitical sea change that affected both Japan and the Korean kingdoms.¹²⁴ Seriously exacerbating matters was the Yamato Court's ill-conceived decision, made in 663, to intervene militarily on behalf of their long-time ally Paekche, who was being threatened by the combined might of Silla

¹²³ To be precise, the administrative portion of the code was published in 701, while the portion treating criminal law came one year later.

¹²⁴ Bruce L. Batten, *Gateway to Japan: Hakata in War and Peace, 500-1300*, p. 24.

and Tang China. For Japan, the result was an enormously expensive war effort that ended in complete defeat at the Battle of Paekchon River.¹²⁵

Fearing outright invasion by continental enemies, Yamato leaders accelerated efforts to consolidate their power and implement administrative reforms. These reforms also helped to stabilize domestic politics by providing a rigorous legal framework within which family disputes and factional disagreements at court could be resolved in a non-violent manner.¹²⁶ Although the *ritsuryō* system enhanced the authority of Yamato leaders and contributed to the emergence of Japan's imperial state, its operation depended as much on participation from below as on control from above. What emerged was a vertically integrated yet conditional polity that was "centered (on the imperial court) but not centralized."¹²⁷

Two consequences of *ritsuryō* state development were of particular relevance to the Munakata shrine establishment. First, the creation of a "sacral hierarchy" that was based on written law served to formalize its place within the imperial polity to a degree never before seen. Through a system of ranks applied to shrines throughout the nation, Munakata elites were brought even more closely into the cultural orbit of the imperial court. Second, the sense of foreign threat felt by seventh and early eighth-century reformers motivated a radical rethinking of provincial administration in Kyushu.

¹²⁵ See Batten, *Gateway*, chapter 1 (especially pp. 18-24) for an account of the conflict, its causes, and its aftermath in Japan.

¹²⁶ Piggott, *Emergence*, p. 177.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

Prior to the events of the 660s, no clear international boundary between “Japan” and the continent was recognized, much less policed, by Yamato authorities.¹²⁸ This changed with the establishment of the Dazaifu, an administrative and defensive headquarters located just south of Munakata territory, near the port of Hakata.¹²⁹ For the next five hundred years, interaction with Dazaifu officials would shape the way Munakata family leaders managed their shrine complex and engaged the local community.

Under the rubric of *ritsuryō* law, Yamato leaders updated and regularized geospatial concepts of administration, dividing Japan into provinces (国), districts (郡), and villages (里). The precise definition of these terms changed several times during the *ritsuryō* era, but the basic sense of a nation-wide system consisting of nested units of territory, each representing one layer of a vertically integrated bureaucracy, remained intact. In addition to being classified according to their economic productivity, a very small number of districts were identified as “shrine districts,” which were formally recognized as the territorial purview of a large local shrine.¹³⁰ Significantly, Munakata

¹²⁸ Batten, *Gateway*, p. 24.

¹²⁹ The earliest surviving attestation to a “governor general” (*dazai*) in Kyushu comes from a 609 reference to the *Tsukushi Dazai* (筑紫太宰). As Batten points out, however, this was not conceived of as a permanent office on the front lines of national security until after Yamato’s defeat at Paekchon River. See Hirano Kunio and Iida Hisao, eds., *Fukuoka-ken no Rekishi*, pp. 28-9. Batten (*Gateway*, pp. 24-5 and 28-41) provides information about the construction of facilities, architectural layout, and diplomatic functions performed by the Dazaifu complex.

¹³⁰ More specifically, a shrine district (*kamigōri*, 神郡) was endowed to a shrine under the *fuko* (封戸) system, whereby a percentage of the rice-field tax (*denso*, 田租), along with tribute in materials and labor (*chō* 調 and *yō* 庸), which the so-called shrine estates (*kanbe*, 神戸) in the district were obliged to pay, would accrue to the shrine. By the year 806, approximately 170

District was one of only eight to be classified as a shrine district by the Nara imperium, being first listed as such in the year 723.¹³¹ The other seven districts, along with their respective shrines, were Watarai and Take districts in Ise Province (Ise Shrine), Awa District in Awa Province (Awa Shrine), Ou District in Izumo Province (Kumano Shrine), Shikajima District in Hitachi Province (Shikajima Shrine), Katori District in Shimosa Province (Katori Shrine), and Nagusa District in Kii Province (Hinokuma-Kunikakasu Shrine).¹³²

The geographic distribution of these shrines is significant: three (Shikajima, Awa, and Katori) were located in the Kanto region of eastern Japan, while Izumo Province's Kumano Shrine represented the Chugoku region of western Japan. Both Ise and Hinokuma-Kunikakasu shrines are situated reasonably close to Japan's historical political center, leaving Munakata Shrine as the sole representative from Kyushu. Inclusion in this elite group attests to high placement within the *ritsuryō* system's sacral hierarchy; there can be little doubt that in the eyes of the Nara authorities, the Munakata Shrine was a potent political ally and a flagship religious institution.

shrines were endowed with shrine estates, but most had only one or a few; less than 50 shrines had more than ten. At this time, the Munakata Shrine had 74 estates, which is more than Katori and Kumano shrines, but far less than Ise, which held 1,230, and Usa, which actually topped the list with 1,660. For a detailed overview of Munakata properties in the *ritsuryō* era, see *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, pp. 624-8.

¹³¹ It is thought that the classification of Munakata District as a shrine district actually occurred shortly after the Taika Reforms of 645, but no extant documentation attests to this. See *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, pp. 624-5.

¹³² *Ibid.* p. 625.

Further evidence of the exceptional treatment accorded to Munakata elites comes in the form of an exemption granted to Munakata District regarding succession to local government posts. In general, *ritsuryō* law prohibited closely related individuals from serving consecutively as upper-level local officials, but in 698, the *Shoku Nihongi* records that the rule was relaxed for Munakata and Ou districts.¹³³ Over the next twenty years, this exemption would be extended to all eight original shrine districts, but it is noteworthy that it was first applied to areas traditionally seen as far outside the core of archipelagan kingship. The reasons for these exemptions are not entirely clear, but it is thought that the kinship restrictions created administrative problems within the shrine districts, prompting the central government to take the initiative and relax them.¹³⁴ Nothing in the *Shoku Nihongi* entry suggests that the shrines themselves petitioned to have the restrictions lifted, though that possibility cannot be discounted. At any rate, the move stands in contrast to the general trend of the times: In the year 735, kinship restrictions were actually tightened for general districts (公郡), making it unlawful for

¹³³ *Shoku nihongi*, Monmu 2 (698).3.5. See *SNKBT*, vol. 12, p. 9. Closely related was defined as being of “third-degree kinship (三等親) or higher.” The degrees of kinship were complex. First-degree kin were fathers, mothers, foster fathers, foster mothers, husbands, and children. Second-degree kin included grandmothers and grandfathers, stepmothers, paternal uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters, wives and concubines, nieces, grandchildren, one’s father’s primary wife (if you’re the child of a secondary wife), one’s husband’s parents, and one’s son’s wife. Third-degree kin included great grandparents, wives of paternal uncles, one’s husband’s nieces and nephews, one’s half siblings (by a different father), one’s husband’s grandparents, one’s husband’s paternal uncles and aunts, a stepfather living in the same residence as oneself, and children by one’s husband’s former wife. See *SNKBT*, vol. 12, p. 258.

¹³⁴ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 626.

two persons of the same family name to serve together in district magistracies (*gunji*, 郡司).¹³⁵

Beyond official references to the Munakata shrine establishment or Munakata District, individual names of Munakata elites from the Nara Period also occasionally occur, particularly in the *Shoku Nihongi*. One of these, from the year 709, includes the earliest mention of a Munakata family member occupying the position of senior magistrate for Munakata District.¹³⁶ All references to Munakata elites in the *Shoku Nihongi* relate promotions in rank; this appears to be the primary criterion for mention. Unfortunately, while these entries serve as useful evidence of prestige relations between the Nara Imperium and the Munakata family, they are generally short and do not provide details regarding the personal circumstances of the individuals cited.

A partial exception to this is provided by the entry for Munakata Ason no Fukatsu (深津), which, while short, contains the name of his wife and explains the specific reason for his (and her) promotion. In the year 767, Fukatsu, along with his wife Take no Himemiko, oversaw the construction of an anchorage and breakwater off the tip of

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 626. The term *gunji* is usually a collective reference to the four types of provincial officials: *tairyô* (大領, “senior magistrate”), *shôryô* (少領, “junior magistrate”), *shusei* (主政, “secretary”), and *shuchô* (主帳, “recorder”). Alternatively, it may denote a single individual, in which case it is usually synonymous with the senior magistrate. As observed by J. W. Hall, it was the *gunji* (referring here to single individuals) who “provided the most consistent and continuous element of government at the local level.” (Quoted from John Whitney Hall, *Government and Local Power in Japan, 500-1700*, pp. 78-9). The translations for *tairyô*, *shôryô*, *shusei*, and *shuchô* are from Batten, “Provincial Administration in Early Japan: From Ritsuryô Kokka to Ocho Kokka,” p. 109.

¹³⁶ *Shoku nihongi* Wadô 2 (709).3.5.

Kanezaki promontory.¹³⁷ This area served the shipping needs of fishermen and others going between the Kyushu coast and the island of Ôshima, but the waters were apparently treacherous and shipwrecks numerous.¹³⁸ The project seems to have been recommended, and possibly supervised, by a Buddhist monk named Jûô (壽應); upon its successful completion, Fukatsu was promoted to outer fifth rank, lower grade, and his wife was promoted to inner junior fifth rank, lower grade.¹³⁹ Under the *ritsuryô* ranking system, so-called “outer” ranks were bestowed on non-aristocratic provincial officials who typically held their positions for life.¹⁴⁰ The fact that Fukatsu’s wife was granted an “inner” rank suggests that she may have been of aristocratic birth;¹⁴¹ if this is indeed the case, it offers yet further evidence of the deep ties the Munakata maintained with central elites. Whatever her parentage, her involvement with the Kanezaki project and subsequent commendation alongside her husband is unique among women associated with the Munakata family during this period. Moreover, this first round of construction at Kanezaki laid the foundation (metaphorically speaking, at least) for the additional facilities built there during the early Kamakura Period.

¹³⁷ *Shoku nihongi* Jingo-keiun 1 (767).8.4.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* Also see *Munakata Jinjashi* vol.2, p. 405.

¹³⁹ *Munakata Jinjashi* vol. 2, p. 405.

¹⁴⁰ For a detailed overview of *ritsuryô*-era ranks and offices, see Rekishigaku Kenkyukai, ed., *Nihonshi shiryô*, vol. 1, “Kodai,” pp. 122-6.

¹⁴¹ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 406

Family elites, however, are not the only figures associated with the Munakata to garner mention in the historical record. One of the lengthier episodes involving the Munakata name concerns not an elite but a “commoner” (*ômitakara*, 百姓) who was attached to the Munakata clan through his membership in a hereditary subaltern group called a *be* (部).¹⁴² It is given as an annotation to a series of mournful poems (*banka*, 挽歌) dedicated to a man named Arao and recorded in the *Man'yôshû*:

During the years of Jinki (724-29), Dazaifu officials asked a man named Tsumaro of the Munakata *be* to captain a ship taking provisions to Tsushima. Tsumaro thereupon went to find a seaman named Arao, who was from the village of Shiga in Kasuya District. Tsumaro said to him: “I have a small matter I’d like to talk to you about, if that’s alright with you.” Arao replied: “Though we are from different districts, we have long served together at sea. My feelings for you are those of a brother; even if you asked me to die in your stead, how could I refuse?” Tsumaro then said: “Officials from the Dazaifu have ordered me to captain a ship taking provisions to Tsushima. But my health has deteriorated in my old age, and I wouldn’t last the journey. Therefore I have come to humbly ask if you would take my place.” Arao agreed to Tsumaro’s request. The ship departed from Mineraku Point, which is in the Matsuura District (*agata*) of Hizen Province, and sailed straight for Tsushima.¹⁴³ But without warning, the sky suddenly became dark, and the ship was caught in rain and fierce gales. It sank in the middle of the ocean, unable to get to calmer conditions. On account of this tragedy, wives and children of those lost, beset by unbearable grief, composed these poems. Alternatively, some say that the poems were composed by the

¹⁴² The *be* may be defined as specialized worker communities that provided services to the Yamato throne, senior consorts or princes, or powerful clans in the fifth through the seventh centuries. (Quoted from Piggott, *Emergence*, p. 305, with minor orthographic changes).

¹⁴³ Technically speaking, the *agata* (県) were pre-Taika administrative units of land. After the Taika Reforms, they became districts (*kôri*). By the time the events related here took place, Matsuura had become a *kôri*, but this entry suggests that the term *agata* remained in use in common parlance. In the Heian Period, *agata* came to denote a province over which a governor (国司) had been appointed.

governor of Chikuzen, Yamanoue Okura, out of the sympathy he felt for the bereaved.¹⁴⁴

It is not known who actually composed either the poems about Arao (there were ten in all) or this passage explaining their background. The most common view seems to be that the poems were the work of Okura, and the background annotation the work of a third party, possibly Ôtomo no Yakamochi.¹⁴⁵ Written in impeccable *kanbun* and reinforcing the pathos of the preceding poems, the prefatory passage is probably best understood as being part of the literary performance, since it is unlikely that the author could have had such detailed information regarding Tsumaro's private conversation with the now-dead Arao. Still, the basic elements of the narrative, such as Tsumaro being asked by the Dazaifu to pilot the ship, Arao taking the job in his stead, and the loss of the vessel and crew at sea, are likely accurate.¹⁴⁶

The passage is important because it provides written attestation to the Munakata *be*, the existence of which is known only through Nara Period texts. In addition to the

¹⁴⁴ Omodaka, *Man'yôshû Chûshaku*, vol. 16, p. 202.

¹⁴⁵ Omodaka, *Man'yôshû Chûshaku*, vol. 16, pp. 202-4. The evidence that the passage was composed by a third party (and not Okura himself) comes from the honorific placement of Okura's title *omi* at the end of his full name instead of in between his family and given names (i.e. 山上憶良臣 as opposed to 山上臣憶良). The supposition that the passage might be the work of Ôtomo no Yakamochi is given in Kojima Noriyuki, Kinoshita Masatoshi, and Satake Akihiro, eds., *Nihon koten bungaku zenshû*, vol. 5, "Man'yôshû," pt. 4, p. 145.

¹⁴⁶ This assessment is based on the fact that regulations in the tax code (主税式) stipulated that Chikuzen, Chikugo, Hizen, Higo, Buzen, and Bungo provinces were required to provide 2,000 *koku* of rice annually to the administrative staff and garrison (防人) stationed on Tsushima, and that the historic association of the Munakata (and presumably the Munakata *be*) with seafaring makes the scenario as described eminently plausible.

Man'yôshû, the *Shoku Nihongi* twice references members of the Munakata *be*.

Significantly, it appears that the subordinate origins of the *be* did not prevent some members from rising to positions of local prominence. A *Shoku Nihongi* entry from the year 709 relates that the senior magistrate of Mikasa District was a man from the Munakata *be* named Kataushi; for reasons unspecified, he was awarded the title (*kabane*) of Mashiki no *muraji*, thereby garnering him mention in the official record.¹⁴⁷ Population registers (*koseki*, 戸籍) from the Nara Period also attest to the presence of Munakata *be* living in Chikuzen and the neighboring province of Hizen.¹⁴⁸

Under the Taika Reforms of 645, *be* communities belonging privately to powerful families like the Munakata, the so-called *kakibe* (部曲), were surrendered to Yamato authorities. In the pre-Taika era, the Munakata *be* was likely an important source of Munakata wealth,¹⁴⁹ but by the Nara Period, the term *be* had all but lost its original social connotations.¹⁵⁰ Evidence suggests that not all record keepers were meticulous about distinguishing the main Munakata line from the Munakata *be*, for on at least two occasions, individuals known to have been born to the Munakata *be* were simply referred

¹⁴⁷ *Shoku nihongi*, Wadô 2 (709).6.21.

¹⁴⁸ Taihô 2 (702) Chikuzen no Kuni, Shima no Kôri, Kawabe no Sato *koseki* (*Dai Nippon komonjo*, vol. 1, pp. 124-125).

¹⁴⁹ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 622.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 624.

to as Munakata,¹⁵¹ and at the dawn of the Heian Period, references to the Munakata *be* disappear altogether.¹⁵²

The year 794 marks the beginning of the Heian Period, so named because the capital city was moved from its previous location (Nara) and renamed Heian Kyô, “Capital of Peace and Tranquility.” Despite a protracted economic downturn caused in large part by irresponsible fiscal policies (of which the relocation of the capital was one), the early Heian era saw no major upheavals or institutional reforms.¹⁵³ The time-tested machinery of Chinese-style bureaucratic government was securely in place, foreign threats had largely subsided, and court politics had become noticeably more civilized.¹⁵⁴ As noted earlier, one of the most important institutional relationships maintained by the Munakata was that with the Dazaifu. The earliest extant records that shed light on this relationship date from the early Heian Period; the first of these is especially important, as

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 409. These were Munakata (*be*) no Wakamaro and Munakata (*be*) no Ishimaro, the latter of whom was a bronze metalsmith (銅工).

¹⁵² This is based on a search of the electronic database of the Historiographical Institute at the University of Tokyo.

¹⁵³ A complete treatment of the economic problems of late Nara-early Heian times is given in Bruce L. Batten, “Provincial Administration in Early Japan: From Ritsuryô Kokka to Ocho Kokka,” pp. 103-34, esp. 116-7. See also Piggott, *Emergence*, pp. 282-3.

¹⁵⁴ With regard to foreign relations, tensions between Japan and Silla surfaced again in the 720s and 730s, but diplomatic ties were maintained throughout. When they were finally cut in 779, the cause was not outright hostility but rather disinterest, particularly on the Japanese side; it is abundantly clear, moreover, that Japanese leaders, while vigilant towards their peninsular rival, were not gripped by fears of impending invasion as they had been at the turn of the seventh century. See Batten, *Gateway*, pp. 53-4. With respect to factional conflict in the Nara Period, see Ronald P. Toby, “Why Leave Nara?: Kammu and the Transfer of the Capital,” pp. 331-347, esp. pp. 333-4 and 342, and Piggott, *Emergence*, p. 281.

it yields insights into the way local administration and internal shrine affairs were viewed by government authorities.

In the year 800, on the basis of a writ from the Department of State (太政官), the Dazaifu issued an order that forbade the senior magistrate (大領) of Munakata District from simultaneously holding the office of chief priest (神主) for the Munakata Shrine.¹⁵⁵ The document makes clear that part of the motivation for this was a desire to routinize and focus the chief priest position. Two years earlier, a Munakata elite named Ikezukuri had died while simultaneously occupying both posts. His death left an unexpected and protracted vacancy at the head priest position, something evidently seen as highly problematic by authorities. In fact, ten years before that, the Department of Worship (神祇官) had recommended instituting a six year term limit on the position, perhaps in order to avoid just the kind of situation engendered by Ikezukuri's death. Clearly, this was not immediately implemented.

At another level, the Dazaifu order is reflective of a broader effort begun by Emperor Kanmu to strengthen *ritsuryō*-style administration at the provincial level.¹⁵⁶ According to an imperial edict from 798, hereditary appointment to district magistracies was formally abolished in favor of selection on the basis of merit.¹⁵⁷ In general, district-level appointments such as senior magistrate were occupied by local figures and held for

¹⁵⁵ Enryaku 19 (800).12.4 Dajōkanfu (*DTS* vol. 1, pp. 249-50).

¹⁵⁶ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 412.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 412.

life.¹⁵⁸ With respect to the Munakata Shrine, court authorities thought it disruptive to have a lifetime position and what *should* be a term-limited position held by the same individual.¹⁵⁹ Yet divorcing the chief priest and senior magistrate positions should not be viewed as a substantial impingement on Munakata family prerogatives: both posts were still filled by Munakata elites, and the latter remained a lifetime appointment. Rather the issue was (1) the continuity and stability of the office of chief priest, which the Department of Worship wanted filled by a “pure and honest” (潔清廉貞) man, and (2) the appointment of individuals who were actually qualified to staff the provincial bureaucracy.¹⁶⁰

Many surviving documents that relate to the Munakata Shrine during *ritsuryō* times attest to prayer requests made by the court. In 838, prayers were ordered said for the safe departure and return of Japanese emissaries sent to Tang China (遣唐使),¹⁶¹ and in 870, offerings were made to the Hachiman-Usa and Kashii Shrines, as well as to the Munakata and Kamunabi (甘南備) deities.¹⁶² The offerings came on the heels of a series of bad omens observed throughout the region: in Higo Province, severe weather and an earthquake combined to cause significant damage, and the Dazaifu had been alerted to

¹⁵⁸ Batten, “Provincial Administration,” p. 109.

¹⁵⁹ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 412.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 412.

¹⁶¹ *Shoku Nihon kōki*, Shōwa 5 (838).3.27 (see *DTS* vol. 1, p. 377).

¹⁶² *Nihon sandai jitsuroku*, Jōgan 12 (870).2.15 (see *DTS* vol 2, pp. 187-88).

the presence of two Sillan pirate ships. To make matters worse, a “large bird” had landed on the roof of the armory, and while perhaps not as threatening as earthquakes or pirates, its appearance was nonetheless taken as an ominous sign.

Making offerings to shrines in time of emergency was evidently standard practice, for again in 878, the Munakata Shrine, along with several other high-profile shrines, received gifts from government authorities:

Lieutenant commander Taira no Ason Suenaga, junior fifth rank, lower grade in the Ministry of War and acting assistant director (*gon no suke*) at Ise Shrine, was dispatched to Dazaifu and ordered to make offerings to the great deities of Kashii, Hachiman, Himegami, Sumiyoshi, and Munakata shrines. Kashii, Hachiman, and Himegami shrines each received one set of embroidered silk robes and a ceremonial sword made of gold and silver. These offerings were made because officials at the Dazaifu had received oracular warnings that Sillan pirates were looking to exploit openings in our defenses, and because there had been some ominous portents, such as large birds gathering in Higo Province and river water turning red.¹⁶³

The syntax of the entry suggests that the Munakata and Sumiyoshi shrines were not offered the brocade robes or ceremonial swords; the exact nature of the offerings they did receive is not specified. Among early Heian records treating the Munakata Shrine, this one is particularly valuable because it helps place the establishment within a local religious context. The shrines listed here represent the greatest in Kyushu; Sumiyoshi and Munakata are particularly known for their involvement with seafaring. As it had

¹⁶³ *Nihon sandai jitsuroku*, Genkei 2 (878).12.24 (see *DTS* vol. 2, p. 281). Water turning red seems to be an ominous sign in many cultures. The phenomenon may result from iron deposits being brought suddenly to the surface where they oxidize, or from the presence of microorganisms that produce carotenoid pigments.

done in the Nara Period, the Court patronized regional shrines from its position atop a codified religious hierarchy. The centrality of Ise Shrine in this schema is evinced by the fact that the acting assistant director there was personally sent to make the offerings to the shrines in Kyushu.

Before leaving this section, attention should be given to the remarkable elevation in “divine rank” (神位) achieved by the Munakata Shrine (or, more precisely, its three tutelary goddesses) during the *ritsuryō* era. As noted briefly in chapter one, their upward climb began just as major ritual observances on Okinoshima were coming to an end. In the year 840, the goddesses were granted the junior fifth rank, lower grade; ten years later, they were elevated one step to junior fifth rank, upper grade, and the year after that, to senior fifth rank, lower grade.¹⁶⁴ This was followed in 857 by a promotion to senior third rank. In 859, the three Munakata goddesses were promoted twice in the same year, first to junior second rank, then barely two months later, to senior second rank.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, the goddesses were now being listed in the records as holding the eighth order of merit (勳八等).

With this, the Munakata Shrine outstripped every other shrine in Kyushu save for Usa, Takara, and Aso, the latter of which tied the Munakata Shrine at the senior second rank.¹⁶⁶ For further comparison, the Sumiyoshi deities held junior fifth rank, lower

¹⁶⁴ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 3, p. 18.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19. Upper and lower grades cease to be maintained after the fourth rank.

¹⁶⁶ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, pp. 563-4.

grade, while the Kamado deities held junior fourth rank, upper grade.¹⁶⁷ The upward mobility of the Munakata Shrine during these years is most often understood as a consequence of their renown for securing divine protection from Sillan pirates.¹⁶⁸ This is a very reasonable, if somewhat parsimonious, explanation; certainly the Imperial Court was genuinely concerned about piracy, and the reputation of the Munakata was, as we have seen, especially strong with respect to issues of national defense. Yet it would be their contribution to the resolution of a *domestic* crisis that would earn the Munakata Shrine its highest accolades.

In 941, the Munakata goddesses were elevated to senior first rank and granted the first order of merit. No higher commendation was possible under the *shin'i* rubric. This promotion corresponds precisely to the year Sumitomo's Rebellion was quelled, and although explicit documentation is lacking, it is widely thought that the Munakata aided the Court in defeating the revolt.¹⁶⁹ Orders of merit (勳, *kun*) were given primarily for military service, and while one need not assume that Munakata leaders donned armor and personally charged into battle, it is almost certain that family resources were employed in a way the Court regarded as strategically significant. In the space of one hundred years, the Munakata Shrine had ascended in rank by several orders of magnitude, far surpassing most of its peers; at the very least, this meteoric rise attests to the shrine's close

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 564.

¹⁶⁸ See Masaki, pp. 105-6.

¹⁶⁹ Kawazoe Shôji, *Kyushu no chûsei sekai*, p. 98; *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 564.

relationship with Court authorities and its ability to contribute meaningfully to matters of national importance.

A New Era of Family Leadership: Enter the *Daigūji*

One century after Taira no Suenaga was dispatched to make offerings at Kyushu's great shrines, the Munakata family introduced a new office at the apex of its religious and administrative hierarchy. Its occupant, known as the *daigūji* (大宮司) or “grand shrine head,” combined sacred and secular authority and presided over family affairs. This development marks a move towards greater centralization of power within the Munakata shrine establishment.¹⁷⁰ Traditional family accounts cite one Munakata Kiyouji (清氏), reportedly a younger brother of Emperor Daigo, as the first grand shrine head.¹⁷¹ He was supposed to have taken office in 914, but evidence supporting this is sketchy, as modern studies of Munakata genealogy have yielded no evidence, documentary or otherwise, that

¹⁷⁰ I have chosen the translation “shrine head” for two reasons. First, while the term *gūji* is often rendered as “head priest,” a similar phrase has already been used for *jinshu* or *kaminushi/kannushi* (神主). Second, although the duties of the *daigūji* did include presiding over important ceremonies and observances, his identity was not purely (or even primarily) religious; as will become clear in later sections, the *daigūji* was nearer in many respects to the patriarchal heads of aristocratic or warrior families. Hence, I have avoided using a title like “priest” in the translation, which, at least to me, implies an almost exclusively religious role for the bearer.

¹⁷¹ See *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, pp. 429 and 435.

confirms Kiyouji existed.¹⁷² When Kaibara Ekken examined the matter three centuries ago, he reported that he could find no siblings of Emperor Daigo named Kiyouji, and concluded that Kiyouji either did not exist or had been lost from the historical record:

As told in family legends, the first shrine patriarch was known as Kiyouji, and he was a younger brother to Emperor Daigo, son of Emperor Uda. The keepers of the shrine also told me that he was known as Kôen. In the fourteenth year of Engi (914), he received an imperial edict and became the grand head of the Munakata Shrine. He came to this place and refurbished the shrine; he is said to have held the office for sixteen years...

It seems to me that, based on extant evidence, no child of Emperor Uda named Kiyouji ever existed. Alternatively, it might be that he did exist, but was gradually dropped from the ancient chronicles.¹⁷³

Regardless of the historicity of Kiyouji, it is clear that the office of grand shrine head did have its genesis in the tenth century, though probably some decades after Kiyouji's supposed tenure. The earliest documentary attestation to the position occurs in 979, during the twilight of the *ritsuryô* era.¹⁷⁴ The Munakata needed (or at least wanted) the official blessing of Dazaifu authorities, so they submitted a request to have family

¹⁷² Ibid. p. 429.

¹⁷³ *Ekken Zenshû*, vol. 4, p. 355. Apparently, Ekken detected a penchant for exaggeration in family records, for he goes on to relate the following:

According to the legends of the Munakata priests, from the time of Ujio (the second grand shrine head) to the more recent Ujisada (1512-51), every shrine head held the rank of middle counselor (*chûnagon*). This is doubtful. Among court appointees, there is no record of anyone being appointed a Munakata grand shrine head and a middle counselor.

¹⁷⁴ Tengen 2 (979).2.14 Dajôkanfu (*DTS* vol. 4, p. 153-4).

leader Munakata Ujiyoshi (氏能) formally recognized as grand shrine head.¹⁷⁵ The Dazaifu response was detailed and highly informative, providing several key insights into Munakata-Dazaifu relations.

First, its tenor is highly complimentary towards the Munakata Shrine and its venerable history. The document praises the shrine's contribution to national security, stating that "this shrine has, from the beginning of time, been a guardian of Japan, and its miraculous works are beyond reckoning." Second, we learn that the position of grand shrine head was not a Munakata innovation, but had already been instituted at Sumiyoshi, Kashii, Tsukushi, Kamado, and Hakozaiki shrines. Prior to the creation of this office, religious leadership at the Munakata Shrine had rested with the chief priest (神主), encountered earlier as the position on which court authorities wanted to place term limits. Evidently, the chief priest was also in charge of various administrative duties, so while the introduction of the *daigūji* was a significant step towards revamping family organization, one may assume that it represented a movement long in the making. In all, the Dazaifu response demonstrates great confidence in Ujiyoshi, stating towards the end that he is "competent and well prepared," and that it is "highly fitting that he be recommended (for the position of *daigūji*)."

The formal establishment of a position that synthesized multiple aspects of shrine business inaugurated a new era for the Munakata family. No longer simply a clan

¹⁷⁵ In the narrative that posits Kiyouji to be the first grand shrine head, Ujiyoshi is generally listed as the fourth, but the document cited above is the earliest extant record of a *daigūji*. See *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 429, and family tree on p. 435.

headman or religious figure, the *daigūji* was both patriarch of the family and chief executive of the entire shrine complex. In theory, the position was hereditary, passed from father to a designated primary male heir (*chakushi*, 嫡子).¹⁷⁶ In time, the Munakata Shrine would emerge as a powerful corporate body, holding dozens of estates in Munakata and neighboring districts. Through the office of the *daigūji*, the Munakata enterprise defined itself publicly as a patrilineal institution with one supreme leader. The existence of such an office enabled the Munakata to expand economically without losing internal cohesion, thereby laying the foundation for the family's prosperity in the late Heian and Kamakura periods.

¹⁷⁶ A single individual could, and often did, hold the office multiple times. Sometimes, it alternated between the same cadre of brothers every few years. The important thing was that the position be eventually passed on to someone whose father had once held it. The intent was that it remain within the Munakata main line (嫡流), which it did until the late sixteenth century.

CHAPTER IV

THE MUNAKATA IN THE EARLY MEDIEVAL ERA

For the Munakata, the eighth through the tenth centuries witnessed robust growth within the parameters of the *ritsuryō* order. Yet while the basic vocabulary and administrative skeleton of the *ritsuryō* system remained largely intact throughout the entire Heian Period, fundamental changes in economic and political organization, compounded by internal rigidities within the system itself, had caused it to break down in practice over the course of the ninth century.¹⁷⁷ In particular, centralized control over the distribution of land, a basic principle of *ritsuryō* governance, was all but abandoned by the year 900.¹⁷⁸ This paved the way for the proliferation of private estates known as *shōen* (荘園), the institutional development of which reached maturity over the course of the tenth century.¹⁷⁹ These estates became emblematic of a general move towards

¹⁷⁷ The causes of the system's decline are a topic of substantial study. See Batten, "Provincial Administration," and William Wayne Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land in Early Japan, 645-900*, esp. pp. 141-9.

¹⁷⁸ Batten, "Provincial Administration," p. 132.

“privatization” that has been called the most important economic trend of the late Heian era.¹⁸⁰ Not surprisingly, *shôen* became central to the prosperity of the Munakata, and as will be seen later, they occasionally featured in intra-familial property disputes.

The course of development of *shôen* on Munakata territory is difficult to map precisely, but a key element was likely the ownership of tax-exempt properties known as shrine fields (*shinden*, 神田).¹⁸¹ In general, *shinden*, along with their counterpart for Buddhist temples, *jiden* (寺田), set an early precedent for immunity from government intrusion that would eventually be extended to a range of other landholdings as *ritsuryô*-style authority waned.¹⁸² Of course, not all Munakata properties were *shinden*; most were estates known as *kanbe* (see note 131). The shrine held the rights to a percentage of the income produced on these properties, but under *ritsuryô* law, did not have “ownership” (所有権) over the land itself. A centrally appointed, term-limited administrative staff headed by a provincial governor (*kami*, 守) effectively stood in

¹⁷⁹ Elizabeth Sato, “The Early Development of the Shôen,” pp 103-4. Sato notes that the development of *shôen* was a long and gradual process, and that it is thus necessary to distinguish “mature” *shôen* from their earlier (i.e. pre-tenth century) counterparts. According to Sato (p. 104), “the *shôen* was not yet fully established as a distinct institution for proprietary control of the land during the eighth and ninth centuries.”

¹⁸⁰ Fujiki Kunihiro, *Ninon zenshi*, vol. 3 “Kodai II,” p. 241. Although privatization was a gradual process, its effects reverberated beyond the economic arena and into the cultural sphere as well: as Elizabeth Sato observed, the importance of private property as an “element of power” grew as the central government’s administrative authority shrank. See Sato, “The Early Development of the Shôen,” pp. 91-108.

¹⁸¹ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 629.

¹⁸² Fujiki, p. 242. The degree of such immunity could vary. Properties enjoying complete immunity are known as “un-taxable and inviolable” (*fuyu-funyû*, 不輸不入) properties.

between the shrine and its *kanbe*.¹⁸³ Through them, the government (specifically, the *Jingikan*) was able to exert authority over shrine estates; this was one facet of *ritsuryō* state authority at the local level.

Although the economic resources directly commanded by the Heian government were reduced over the course of the ninth and tenth centuries, its cultural capital remained unparalleled, so that even as new forms of property-centered power emerged, they were articulated within a remarkably stable system of prestige distribution.¹⁸⁴ This is attested to most vividly by the late Heian practice of “commendation” (*kishin*, 寄進), whereby local holders of *shōen* would endow their properties to a powerful noble or aristocratic institution, termed the *honke* (本家) or “patron,” in exchange for protection from intrusion from lower-levels of government.¹⁸⁵ Under such an arrangement, the original holder forwarded a fraction of his estate’s income to the *honke* but retained near complete authority over matters of administration and land management.¹⁸⁶ The Munakata family would adopt this strategy in the mid-twelfth century, commending the

¹⁸³ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 628.

¹⁸⁴ As Cornelius Kiley observed, the Heian state increasingly became a “judicial” rather than an “administrative” organization. See Cornelius J. Kiley, “Estate and Property in the Late Heian Period,” p. 114.

¹⁸⁵ In particular, protection from aggressive “tax managers” known as *zuryō* was often sought. See Kiley, “Estate and Property,” esp. pp. 115-18. A general overview of the *kishin* phenomenon is provided in Fujiki, *Nihon zenshi*, vol. 3, pp. 247-9 and 251-2.

¹⁸⁶ Kuroda Toshio, “Chūsei shōensei ron,” p. 61.

shrine's key holdings to the office of retired sovereign Toba.¹⁸⁷ It is thought that they were motivated, at least in part, by a desire to escape the expanded powers the Dazaifu chiefs (*sochi* and *daini*) had begun to wield a century earlier.¹⁸⁸ After being briefly transferred to the Bifukumon-in, the Munakata territories came under the patronage of the Hachijō-in around 1160.¹⁸⁹ Like all shares of interest in the *shōen* proprietary pyramid, patronage rights, known as *honke-shiki*, were readily transferable; between 1150 and 1299, the Munakata Shrine and its primary territories would have fourteen different patrons.¹⁹⁰

The Munakata Shrine is known to have held approximately 40 *shōen* throughout the early medieval period, mostly in the Chikuzen districts of Munakata, Ade, Onga, Itojima, and Tagawa.¹⁹¹ Beyond Chikuzen Province, the shrine held properties in Buzen, Hizen, and Iki Island as well.¹⁹² The level of Munakata jurisdiction over these was not uniform; some, such as those endowed to the Hachijō-in, were the sole administrative

¹⁸⁷ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 3, p. 39.

¹⁸⁸ Masaki, *Munakata Taisha*, pp. 107-8. Batten notes that the Dazaifu chiefs expanded their powers on their own initiative, as their official mandate had not really changed. See Batten, "Cross-border Traffic on the Kyushu Coast," p. 378.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41. These are the cloistered offices (and personal titles) of Fujiwara no Nariko and her daughter, Princess Akiko, respectively. Over the course of the early medieval era, the Hachijō-in would become a particularly large conglomerate holder of *shōen*.

¹⁹⁰ See *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 715 for a complete list of all the *honke*, together with the dates of patronage (where known).

¹⁹¹ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 3, p. 639.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 639.

purview of the Munakata, while others were lands in which the family held only a partial stake.¹⁹³ Unfortunately, because data regarding these estates is quite scant, it is generally impossible to know their exact dimensions, economic productivity, or when they first came into Munakata hands.¹⁹⁴ In general, entries in family records that speak of “fundamental shrine territories” (根本神領) are taken to refer to lands that have been in Munakata possession for a very long time. Many of these are undoubtedly the old *kanbe* estates from *ritsuryō* times, which underwent a process of “*shōen*-ization” (荘園化) during the mid-Heian period.¹⁹⁵

Following the political ascendancy of the Taira family in the mid twelfth century, the authority structure governing Munakata lands changed once again. After securing victory in the Hogen disturbance of 1158, Taira no Kiyomori was granted the post of senior assistant governor at the Dazaifu. Kiyomori was succeeded at the Dazaifu by his half brother, Yorimori, who not only assumed the office, but actually took up residence in Kyushu.¹⁹⁶ Yorimori was also appointed central proprietor (*ryōke*, 領家) of Munakata shrine territories, among other lands in Kyushu.¹⁹⁷ In the 1180s, the Taira were defeated

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 631; Masaki, p. 108.

¹⁹⁴ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 639.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 630.

¹⁹⁶ Batten, *Gateway*, p. 122. According to Batten, this was quite unusual at the time, for after about 1120, most appointees chose to stay in Kyoto and appoint deputies to make the trek to Kyushu in their place.

¹⁹⁷ In the nomenclature of *shōen* rights, the *ryōke* stands below the *honke* in status.

by another warrior family, the Minamoto, in a five-year conflict known to history as the Genpei War. After the fall of the Taira, the Munakata properties that had come under Yorimori's proprietorship were confiscated. However, in consideration of the fact that Yorimori's mother had spared the Minamoto leader, Yoritomo, from execution as a boy, he decided to return the lands to Yorimori.¹⁹⁸ After Yorimori's death in 1186, shrine head Munakata Ujizane sought formal confirmation (*ando*, 安堵) of hereditary ownership over those estates; this was approved by the Hachijō-in and granted by Yoritomo, effectively inducting the Munakata into the ranks of Minamoto vassals and significantly strengthening their claim over shrine territory.¹⁹⁹

After his victory in the Genpei War, Minamoto Yoritomo set about creating a new polity that would function in tandem with existing political structures while preserving warrior autonomy.²⁰⁰ He founded his government in the eastern city of Kamakura, far removed from the traditional center of political power. Perhaps surprisingly, this dyarchical system functioned exceptionally well, though it engendered extremely complex, overlapping layers of authority, a fact well attested to in judicial documents of the era. As landholding arrangements evolved under the new warrior regime, the Munakata family needed to ensure that their effective control over shrine properties was

¹⁹⁸ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 691.

¹⁹⁹ Bunji 3 (1187).8.7 Minamoto Yoritomo ukebumi an (*Munakata Taisha monjo*, vol. 2, pp. 130-1).

²⁰⁰ Regarding Yoritomo and his political thinking, see Jeffery P. Mass, *Yoritomo and the Founding of the First Bakufu: The Origins of Dual Government in Japan*.

not eroded. This meant actively seeking to secure access to the newly important post of *jitô* (地頭, “steward”) on Munakata territories. Under Yoritomo’s polity, the term *jitô* came to be applied in a totally new way, denoting an office that, while similar in function to previously existing positions of managerial authority over land, derived its legitimacy from Kamakura, not Kyoto.²⁰¹ The *jitô* was a Bakufu appointment; to receive it was to be integrated into the rubric of warrior bureaucracy. For Munakata elites, occupying the post of *jitô* on family lands served to reinforce their standing in the Kamakura polity and forestall potential conflicts that might arise if outsiders were vested with *jitô* powers over Munakata property. Yoritomo, for his part, adopted a proactive strategy towards Kyushu, awarding *jitô* posts in large measure to natives of that island.²⁰²

In 1191, just before Yoritomo was formally recognized as shogun, former shrine head Munakata Ujiie successfully sued for the stewardship rights (地頭職, *jitô shiki*) to several Munakata properties.²⁰³ Over the next several decades, the Munakata family garnered many more *jitô* appointments, some even outside of Chikuzen Province. In 1264, Munakata Ujinari was awarded partial stewardship rights to the village of Nagano, located in Hizen Province.²⁰⁴ This particular property had actually been in Munakata hands before, belonging to Ujinari’s father, Ujitsune. Ujitsune’s original intent seems to

²⁰¹ Mass, *Founding*, pp. 130 and 254. An illuminating treatment of the etymology of the word ‘*jitô*’ and its collocation with ‘*shiki*’ (“rights” or “office”) is given on pp. 110-118 and 120.

²⁰² Mass, *Founding*, p. 161.

²⁰³ Kenkyû 2 (1191).8.1 Kantô migyôsho an (*DTS* vol. 7, p. 203).

²⁰⁴ Bun’ei 1 (1264).5.10 Kantô saikyojô an (*DTS* vol. 8, p. 96).

have been to divide the property between Rokurô Ujinari and another of his children, Shôtârô Ujisato; perhaps predictably, a dispute arose between the would-be inheritors. According to a pledge signed on 4/17/1262, the property was divided more or less evenly, with the eastern half going to Ujinari and the western half to Ujisato; this division was demarcated in red ink on a map, and the junior assistant governor at the Dazaifu, Fujiwara (Mutô) no Sukeyoshi, signed off on the transaction.²⁰⁵

Having close connections with both Kyoto elites and the Kamakura Bakufu evidently served the Munakata well in their dealings with other shrine establishments. On at least two separate occasions, once in 1188 and again in 1225, the Munakata were exempted from contributing to repair projects on Usa Shrine.²⁰⁶ In the first document, the justification for excusing the Munakata from the repair project is the “lack of precedent” for the Usa Shrine’s request; in the second, it is the worry that providing the several hundred laborers called for by Usa would impinge upon the revenue the Hachijô-in was receiving from Munakata properties. Both of these documents serve as examples of how the multifaceted structure of authority during this era worked. The Kamakura regime (or, in the 1188 document, Yoritomo himself) confirms the instructions of the Hachijô-in to have the Munakata Shrine exempted. This is representative of a broader pattern of interplay between aristocratic domain and warrior dominion, whereby both types of

²⁰⁵ Incidentally, this case demonstrates that *jitô shiki* were partible. The specific term used in both documents is *chûbun* (中分), which literally refers to an even division. For an exploration of *chûbun*, see Jeffery P. Mass, “Jitô Land Possession in the Thirteenth Century,” esp. pp. 165-83.

²⁰⁶ Bunji 4 (1188).4.10 (*DTS* vol. 7, p. 191-2) and Karoku 1 (1225).12.3 Kantô migyôsho utsushi (*DTS* vol. 7, p. 387-8).

power functioned in a more or less complementary fashion.²⁰⁷ For the sake of completeness, it should be noted that the Usa Shrine was clearly unhappy with the ruling: in 1225, the same year as the second Munakata exemption, they complained that “due to the uncooperativeness of the various provinces,” the repair works were behind schedule.²⁰⁸ Evidently, the Munakata were not the only ones to be exempted from participation in Usa’s repair project.

Crime and Disturbance on Shrine Lands

Like any large landholding organization, the Munakata Grand Shrine occasionally confronted issues of conflict and crime on its estates. One of the first documented incidents of violence on shrine grounds comes from the late Heian period: In 1132, Hetsu Shrine was completely destroyed in a fire, along with several of its most sacred treasures, after a fight apparently got out of hand. This was a major disaster, significant enough to warrant a cabinet meeting (*jin no sadame*), part of which was recorded in Fujiwara no Munetada’s diary *Chûyûki*:

²⁰⁷ The dual structure of governance during this era is explored in depth in Mass, *Founding*, pp. 133-67. The relationship between the Kamakura shogunate and Kyoto imperium is treated in G. Cameron Hurst III, “The Kôbu Polity: Court-Bakufu Relations in Kamakura Japan,” pp. 3-44.

²⁰⁸ *Usa gûki*, Karoku 1 (1225).12.3 (*DTS* vol. 7, p. 387).

On the twenty-ninth day of the twelfth month, 1132, the major counselor Minamoto no Moroyori came to speak in council about the destruction by fire of the Munakata (Shrine) in western Kyushu. He related that the holy effigies, sacred treasures, and all the sutras had been burned to ashes, and that the fire broke out because of a clash between two members of the shrine clergy (社司).²⁰⁹

The ranking nobles in attendance pointed out that lately, the assistant governor general and junior assistant governor general at the Dazaifu, along with the governor of Chikuzen Province, had all been staying in Kyoto, and there was nobody currently at the Dazaifu qualified to take action on the matter.²¹⁰ They ordered an official dispatched to the scene in order to take the suspects into custody and to investigate the fire. Rebuilding the main hall was the top priority, and the loss of the holy effigies (“god-bodies”) seems to have been regarded as the single most tragic consequence of this disaster.

This was not the first time Hetsu Shrine had been damaged in a fire; scarcely more than twenty years earlier, the shrine had burned down when a man identified only as Hironaga set fire to it.²¹¹ The circumstances surrounding this fire are opaque; it is not

²⁰⁹ *Chûyûki*, Chôshô 1 (1132).12.29. The *Chûyûki* does not identify the names of the culprits, but according to the *Munakata Shamu Shidai*, a fourteenth-century record treating internal family events, the fire resulted from a dispute between Ujihira and Ujifusa, both leading figures in the Munakata family. The account given in the *Shamu Shidai* claims that the fire spread to the rest of Tashima Village and “left not a single house standing.” See *Munakata Jinjashi*, Vol. 1, pp. 326-9, and vol. 2, p. 434.

²¹⁰ Batten notes that after around 1120, courtiers assigned to posts in Kyushu generally stayed home in Kyoto and entrusted their duties to deputies. See Batten, *Gateway*, p. 122.

²¹¹ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 1, pp. 327 and 328, note 4.

even known with certainty whether Hironaga was a member of the Munakata family.²¹²

By contrast, accounts of the 1132 conflagration leave no doubt that it was the result of violence. Moreover, it drew significant attention from court authorities, possibly because it exposed the potential problems caused by endemic absenteeism among high-ranking Dazaifu officials. Certainly Munetada's comments suggest that the absence of anybody with authority to take appropriate action hampered the emergency response. Travel between Dazaifu and the capital was not easy, and it likely took many days before the unnamed official dispatched by the court reached the scene of the fire.²¹³

Another case, this time an assault that took place in 1274, provides particular illumination regarding the symbolic significance of violence perpetrated against shrine personnel. According to Munakata records, a shrine priest was beaten and stabbed by a resident of Nishinogô, a community located towards the eastern edge of Chikuzen Province.²¹⁴ It is unclear where the assault occurred or how serious the priest's injuries were; what is noteworthy about the case is that the Dazaifu, backed by shogunal authorities, ordered the assailant to perform ritual purification rites. The junior assistant governor general at the Dazaifu, Fujiwara no Sukeyoshi, makes reference to a signed letter of acknowledgment (請文), proffered by the assailant in the ninth month of 1274, in

²¹² Ibid., p. 328.

²¹³ Nine days is a reasonable assumption of the travel time between the Dazaifu and Kyoto. This is how long it took reports of the Toi Invasion of 1019 to reach the Heian Court; while the fire cited here occurred over a century later, the same basic infrastructure, notably the San'yôdô and its post stations, was still being used. See Batten, *Gateway*, p. 99.

²¹⁴ Kenji 1 (1275).2.23 (*DTS* vol. 8, pp. 254-5).

which he agrees to perform purification rites and cease forthwith committing violent or depredating acts (悪行狼藉). The crime of “beating and injuring with a blade” (打擲刃傷) is certainly serious enough to warrant further legal action, but this particular document makes no reference to any other punishment meted out to the perpetrator. In the supplementary legislation of the Kamakura Bakufu, the penalty for wounding with a knife is exile to the island of Ôshima (another one, off the Izu peninsula), and beating carried a sentence of sixty days incarceration.²¹⁵ These punishments were applied to ordinary civilians (凡下輩); samurai were frequently treated differently.²¹⁶ The assailant in our case was identified as a lay monk (入道), and it is not inconceivable that his religious status affected the way he was dealt with by the authorities. Yet there is only one instance in the *Goseibai Shikimoku*, the bedrock law code of Kamakura-era justice, in which a separate punishment for a religious figure is identified, and in that case it was for a full-fledged Buddhist priest, not a lay monk.²¹⁷ Older aristocratic law codes do contain

²¹⁵ Tsuika-hô no. 704. See Ishii Susumu et al eds., *Chûsei seiji shakai shisô*, (hereafter *CSSS*) vol. 1, p. 84.

²¹⁶ A classic example of differential treatment samurai could receive is provided by article 13 of the *Goseibai Shikimoku*, in which the penalty for beating someone is, for a samurai, confiscation of property or, if he has none, exile. By contrast, lower-ranking “followers” are to be incarcerated. Incidentally, while the length of the incarceration is not given, supplementary law no. 704 is, at least with respect to beating, thought by scholars to provide a specification of the sentence. See Ishii et al, *CSSS*, pp. 15 and 84.

²¹⁷ This is in article 34, which deals with rape and illicit sex. “Capturing” a woman on the road carries penalties of one hundred days unpaid leave for *gokenin* vassals and shaving off half the hair on the head for lower-ranking followers. This apparently derives from the ancient Chinese punishment known as *kun*, 髡. Priests, however, are to be given “special consideration” (斟酌) regarding their punishment. As Kasamatsu Hiroshi points out, it is not clear whether the exception for priests was made because of the actual nature of the crime, or because the author

more detailed “substitute punishments” (閏刑) for members of the clergy, but again it seems surprising to think these would be applied to a lay monk. Hence, in the absence of more information, we are left to wonder what action was taken against our assailant outside of requiring him to perform purifications. It must be emphasized, however, that from the perspective of the Munakata Shrine, such rites were more than mere symbolic gestures; this case suggests that expiating the ritual pollution caused by doing violence to a shrine priest was extremely important to shrine authorities, perhaps even more so than seeking civil damages or criminal prosecution of the offender.

International Trade

Empirical evidence demonstrates that international trade grew rapidly in the twelfth century, but had been more or less stable (and comparatively low in total volume) in preceding centuries.²¹⁸ A long-running debate over how much of this trade was “legal” and how much came through unapproved channels still features prominently in

was simply reminded of bonzes when he wrote down the head-shaving punishment. The details of the “special consideration” afforded to priests are also unspecified. See Ishii et al., *CSSS*, Vol. 1, p. 27 and notes on p. 436.

²¹⁸ See Charlotte von Verschuer (tr. Kristen Lee Hunter), *Across the Perilous Sea: Japanese Trade with China and Korea from the Seventh to the Sixteenth Centuries*, p. 47 and Bruce Batten, “An Open and Shut Case? Thoughts on Late Heian Foreign Trade,” pp. 360-3. Batten trenchantly observes that although there appear to be peaks and troughs in the rhythms of trade, they correspond closely to peaks and troughs in the general amount of surviving historical materials, meaning that the observed fluctuations in trade probably do not reflect actual changes.

modern scholarship. Most representative of the view that sizable amounts of trade did in fact flow through non-Court-approved ports is the work of Mori Katsumi 森克己, whose research on Sino-Japanese commerce, though several decades old, is still widely cited.²¹⁹ While some scholars tend to accept Mori's positions without question, others, most notably Yamauchi Shinji 山内晋次 and Bruce Batten, have refuted his conclusions and posited that Dazaifu control over international trade was, at least until the twelfth century, much more robust than a reading of Mori would convey.²²⁰ A study of the Munakata family may shed light on this debate, for many scholars, beginning with Mori, have noted their connections with the China trade during the late Heian and Kamakura periods.

The first recorded incidents that raise suspicions of Munakata involvement with “off-the-books” trade date from the early eleventh century. By this time, the central government had, relative to earlier centuries, become less active in managing the two central aspects of frontier administration: border defense and the regulation of commerce. These were left in the hands of the Dazaifu, whose lead officials amassed much greater personal authority than they had held in *ritsuryō* times.²²¹ This shift in administrative prerogative did not mean that the court lost all power to police violations; indeed, as late as 1093, a Dazaifu official was punished for having illegally conducted trade with the

²¹⁹ See, for instance, Kawazoe, “Munakata-shi no taigai bōeki” and von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*.

²²⁰ See Batten, “An Open and Shut Case” and “Cross-border Traffic.”

²²¹ Batten, “Cross-border Traffic,” p. 378.

Khitans.²²² However, there are examples of trade in which the principals were Japanese estate owners and Chinese merchants; these have engendered speculation that private commerce was, at least occasionally, either being conducted away from Dazaifu authorities or with their tacit complicity.

Two such incidents involving members of the Munakata family are recorded in Fujiwara Sanesuke's massive diary *Shōyūki*. In the second month of 1013, Munakata Nobutō, an administrator on a property of Sanesuke's known as Takada Pasture, presented Sanesuke with a leopard fur (豹皮), an item obviously not of domestic origin.²²³ The next year, Sanesuke mentions Munakata Taetada, who served as administrator of Takada Pasture after retiring from his previous position of Munakata shrine head, as having helped him obtain medicines from a Chinese doctor-monk (醫僧) named Hui Qing.²²⁴ One of the drugs was an unspecified eye medicine, while the other was for Sanesuke's son, who had a case of intestinal parasites, a common ailment in pre-modern times.²²⁵ Getting the medicines was no evidently small feat, for the entry

²²² Von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, p. 45.

²²³ *Shōyūki*, Chōwa 2 (1013).8.7.

²²⁴ *Shōyūki*, Chōwa 3 (1014).6.25. Taetada is traditionally listed as the sixth shrine head, counting from Kiyouji. Counting from Ujijoshi, Taetada is the third shrine head for whom solid documentary evidence exists. It is not clear how Taetada was related to Nobutō. See *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, pp. 430, 435, and 436, note 4.

²²⁵ That this ailment was quite common throughout pre-modern times is noted by Sakai Shizu in *E de yomu Edo no yamai to yōjō* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2003), p. 21. Batten has also noted that modern excavations of the Kōrokan site have revealed latrines and, upon forensic analysis of their contents, parasite eggs. See Batten, *Gateway*, p. 73.

indicates that several people were involved in the effort. Munakata Taetada appears again in 1023, this time as having presented Sanesuke with aloeswood and other Chinese goods.²²⁶ Finally, in 1029, Taetada is recorded as having personally conveyed to Sanesuke gifts and letters from a Chinese businessman named Zhou Wenyi.²²⁷

Mori views these instances as constituting circumstantial evidence of private commercial relations between Kyushu elites and Chinese contacts.²²⁸ Charlotte von Verschuer agrees, citing them as “the first recorded examples of private trade between estates and foreigners, which had formerly been considered illicit by the court.”²²⁹ Batten acknowledges that it is theoretically possible that Chinese smugglers docked at a port on Munakata territory, but argues that the entries in *Shôyûki* do not provide compelling reasons to conclude that the imports Sanesuke received from Taetada did not simply come through the conventional Dazaifu channels.²³⁰ Yet Munakata Taetada was not simply “affiliated with the Munakata area” as Batten (correctly) guessed,²³¹ but was in fact a former shrine head and well connected to the local elite, making it less of a leap to believe he maintained personal contact with foreign traders. That aside, Batten’s basic

²²⁶ *Shôyûki*, Jian 3 (1023).7.16.

²²⁷ *Shôyûki*, Chôgen 2 (1029).3.2.

²²⁸ Mori, *Shintei Nissô Bôeki*, pp. 251-2.

²²⁹ Von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, p. 42.

²³⁰ See Batten, “Cross-border Traffic,” pp. 378-81.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 378

point, namely that the existing evidence for private, estate-centered trade before the twelfth century is circumstantial and may be explained in a more parsimonious fashion, remains valid.

After about 1100, however, the convergence of several developments significantly expanded the opportunities for “free” trade. First, as had been the case for some time, the Chinese economy was booming. The Song epoch witnessed substantial growth in agriculture, industry (particularly iron production), the financial sector (e.g. full monetization and widespread use of paper currency), and overseas trade.²³² Second, the ability of the Kyoto imperium to maintain control of trade fell precipitously during the twelfth century, and Dazaifu officials became increasingly estranged from the day-to-day duties of their office.²³³ Third, Japanese traders began venturing overseas in increasing numbers, first to Korea and then directly to China.²³⁴ Coupled with the growing influence of Hakata’s aforementioned Chinese community, this worked to increase the total volume of trade being conducted. Finally, there appears to have been an increase in the use of private docking facilities elsewhere in Kyushu.²³⁵

²³² For a detailed look at iron production, farming, money, and other aspects of the Song economy, see Mark Elvin, *The Pattern of the Chinese Past*, esp. pp. 84-90, 120-29, and 157-9. For growth in overseas trade during the Song, see pp. 171 and 208.

²³³ Batten, “An Open and Shut Case,” pp. 371, 383.

²³⁴ Von Verschuer, p. 48

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 77-80; Batten, “An Open and Shut Case?” p. 383.

Regarding this latter point, the Munakata family maintained just such a docking facility on the Kanezaki promontory. The general site had been used for shipping since at least the era of Fukatsu and his wife, but by the thirteenth century, the Munakata were apparently keen to improve it. A famous monk by the name of Ô-Amidabutsu (往阿弥陀仏) helped spearhead plans to create a man-made island just off the tip of the promontory.²³⁶ The Munakata proceeded through traditional channels when undertaking the project, requesting formal permission from Kyoto before beginning. The Court's reply, given in the following copy (案) of a direct edict (綸旨) from Emperor Go-Horikawa, was enthusiastic:

Regarding the construction of a man-made island off Kanenomisaki to protect ships from the wind and waves: Ôamidabutsu's petition (for approval to begin construction) has been relayed to the emperor; the earnest aspirations expressed therein represent an enormous undertaking. The plan should be implemented forthwith. Concerning the funds used by the Munakata Shrine, action should be taken in accordance with the petition of the shrine and in keeping with established precedent. However, it is the will of the emperor (*tenki*) that, from now on, using valuables recovered from shipwrecks to supplement the funding of construction projects is prohibited. A decree to this effect shall be made public.

The foregoing is as written.
8/11/1229

Respectfully submitted, Middle Councillor Nijô Sadataka.²³⁷

²³⁶ Ô-Amidabutsu was evidently skilled in offshore construction: one year after completing the Kanezaki project, he designed and built a large artificial island near Kamakura called Wakaejima. This project was completed the following year, thanks in large part to support from Hôjô Yasutoki and other Bakufu leaders. See Shirai Eiji, ed., *Kamakura Jiten* (Tokyo: Tôkyôdô Shuppan, 1976), p. 324.

²³⁷ Kangi 1 (1229).8.2 Go-Horikawa tennô rinji an (*Munakata Taisha monjo*, vol. 1, pp. 5-7).

The stipulation that valuables recovered from foundered ships must not be appropriated by the shrine and used as funds sounds darkly humorous, but the practice was not uncommon and apparently dated back several centuries.²³⁸ The facilities Ô-Amidabutsu designed did not wait long before being used by foreign visitors, for in 1239, less than a decade after their construction began, a Chinese merchant ship docked at Kanazaki, reportedly after surviving a rough voyage.²³⁹ It is not clear what the ship was carrying or whether goods were sold on this occasion; the information that it landed at Kanazaki at all is due to a monk named Eison who rode home on the ship after studying in China.²⁴⁰ The incident demonstrates clearly, however, that international commercial shipping *could* have been conducted regularly from Munakata territory, though it is not clear that it actually was. Mori seems to use Eison's ship as evidence that trading vessels came to call at Kanazaki as a matter of course,²⁴¹ but without knowing exactly why the ship's captain chose Kanazaki over Hakata, one might just as well posit that the incident was unusual and related to the apparent difficulties the vessel encountered at sea.

Still, the case is provocative, for unlike the age of Sanesuke and Taetada, which was characterized by reasonably robust supervision of trade, the Kamakura Period was a

²³⁸ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 651. Evidently, weather patterns and the geometry of the coastline made the area an accumulation point for pieces of wreckage.

²³⁹ Mori, *Shintei Nissô bôeki*, p. 252.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

time of unprecedented openness.²⁴² By any measure, the Munakata were heavily involved in local maritime activities, having properties on several nearby islands; their possession of harbor facilities sufficient to accommodate an oceangoing merchant vessel strongly suggests some level of commercial activity beyond simple offshore fishing. Even if the Chinese captain of Eison's ship did dock at Kanazaki for reasons unrelated to commerce, it is reasonable to assume that he or someone on board was already aware of the port facilities there, which in turn suggests they may have been used on other occasions for more than just emergency purposes.

Regardless of exactly how Chinese imports reached the Munakata during the early medieval era, it is abundantly clear that they did. The physical evidence attesting to Munakata participation in the Hakata-South China concourse is plentiful; some of the most valuable artifacts and pieces of art preserved in the Munakata Shrine's Hall of Holy Treasures (神宝館) were obtained from China during late Heian and Kamakura times.²⁴³ One such artifact is a stone carving of Amida Nyorai believed to be from the late twelfth century.²⁴⁴ The object is actually composed of three sections: a footstone, the main stele, and a capstone, and stands an impressive 1.56 meters in total height.²⁴⁵ On the face of the main stele is an inset carving of Amida in a seated lotus position, while the back contains

²⁴² See von Verschuer, pp. 78-80.

²⁴³ These are objects that have been classified in modern times as "national treasures" (国宝) or "important cultural properties" (重要文化財).

²⁴⁴ See *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, pp. 861-7.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 861-2.

the full text of the Amitabha Sutra and four sections of the Infinite Life Sutra.²⁴⁶ The capstone is carved into the shape of a tiled roof of the sort seen on Buddhist temples.

The circumstances of the item's importation are not known, but one legend explains that during the Jishô era (1177-81), Taira Shigemori dispatched a Munakata retainer to China with three thousand taels of gold dust to be presented to the temple on Yuwang Mountain. In return, the monks presented the retainer with the stone buddha, but by the time he got back to Japan, the Taira were vanquished and the treasure simply remained in Munakata hands.²⁴⁷ This narrative conforms closely to the well-known *Kanewatashi* sub-chapter of the *Heike Monogatari*, in which Shigemori sends Miao Dian (妙典, "Mr. Lotus Sutra"), a Chinese ship captain from Kyushu, to the Yuwang Monastery with a request for prayers. In the story, Miao Dian was given 3500 taels of gold dust, five hundred of which he kept as payment, two thousand of which he presented to the Song Emperor, and one thousand of which he gave to the the Yuwang Monastery. The chapter concludes by simply noting: "It is said the Yuwang monks have prayed unceasingly to this very day for the rebirth in paradise of the Japanese minister of state, Taira no Ason Shigemori."²⁴⁸ According to the *Genpei Jôsuiki* (源平盛衰記), Miao Dian

²⁴⁶ A remarkably clear photograph of the sutra inscriptions can be seen in *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 863; photographic plate no. 47 in the back gives a frontal view of the whole monument; and Kawazoe, "Munakata-shi no Taigai Bôeki," p. 286 includes a beautiful close-up of the inset Amida carving.

²⁴⁷ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 861.

²⁴⁸ Helen Craig McCullough, *The Tale of the Heike*, p. 119, quoted with minor orthographic changes.

was Chinese; other than this, nothing certain is known of him.²⁴⁹ The exact connection between this story and the Munakata legend is difficult to establish. The latter may have appropriated Miao Dian's character and interpreted him as someone who worked for the Munakata family in some capacity. Alternatively, it is plausible, though by no means currently demonstrable, that the *Heike* chapter is based on an actual event that involved a Munakata retainer.²⁵⁰ Yet while it is of uncertain historicity, the legend can, at the very least, be said to reflect the Munakata family's own understanding of their close ties to Kyushu's Chinese community and to Chinese cultural products. These ties were very real, even if the stories surrounding them may occasionally not be.

The stone buddha was not the only treasure to come into Munakata possession during this era. Preserved in the Hall of Holy Treasures are two sculptures of *koma inu* (狛犬), sometimes known in English as imperial guardian lions; like the statue of Amida, these are also of Song provenance. The *A-gyô* (阿形) lion sits with its mouth open protecting a cub, while the *Un-gyô* (吽形) lion sits with mouth closed grasping a sphere with its massive paws.²⁵¹ Carved of hard stone, they stand 47.2 cm and 47.4 cm in height, respectively, not counting their individual square bases, which add approximately 13 cm to each statue. An inscription, still clear and legible after eight centuries, records

²⁴⁹ Tomikura Tokujirô, *Heike Monogatari zenchûshaku*, vol. 1, p. 477.

²⁵⁰ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 3, p. 43.

²⁵¹ The terms *agyô* and *ungyô* (“*A* form and *Un* form”) refer to the Sanskrit sounds ‘*a*’ and ‘*um*,’ which represent respectively the beginning of all things and the end to which everything returns. Pictures of these *koma inu* can be found in the second to last set of plates provided in the back of *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2.

that the sculptures were presented to Hetsu Shrine in 1201 by Fujiwara no Tsukafusa, a man about whom little else is known.²⁵² Although statues of imperial guardian lions are reasonably commonplace in Japan, this particular pair is regarded as being among the most representative of Song aesthetic achievements in sculpture.²⁵³ Like the Amida stele, they attest to the Munakata Shrine's wealth and connections to Japanese elites, and also to its participation in a network of exchange centered on Song China.

Mrs. Wang and Mrs. Zhang

Commerce was not the only vehicle through which the Munakata forged international ties, for the lineage of Munakata shrine heads includes several individuals who were born of Chinese mothers. This began in the late twelfth century, when Munakata Ujizane married a woman known to history as Mrs. Wang. Likely the daughter of resident a Chinese merchant, Mrs. Wang married into the Munakata family during a time of national political turmoil. Her husband Ujizane was one of the most adept family leaders of the age, serving as shrine head no less than five times throughout his life and guiding the Munakata establishment through Japan's transition to dual government. Their union resulted in five sons, two of whom, Ujikuni and Ujitsune,

²⁵² Kawazoe, "Munakata-shi no taigai bôeki," p. 291.

²⁵³ Ibid., pp. 290-1.

served multiple times as shrine heads.²⁵⁴ One generation later, a woman known as Mrs. Zhang, also likely the daughter of a Song merchant active in the Hakata region, married into the Munakata family. She married Munakata Ujitada, the oldest son of Ujizane and Mrs. Wang, and produced three sons, one of whom, Ujinaka, served twice as shrine head.

Unfortunately, given names for the two women do not survive, and their personal histories prior to entering the Munakata family are not known. Wang and Zhang are among a handful of surnames commonly found written on the bases of pottery imported from China during the Kamakura Period. Below the names would be the character 綱 (*gang*; Jp. *kô* or *gô*), which, by denoting a trade association of some kind, is thought to label the shipments as being from the Wang or Zhang commercial group.²⁵⁵ Recent archaeological excavations at Hakata have uncovered a large quantity of this so-called ink-inscribed pottery (墨書陶磁器); other frequently encountered names include Ding (丁), Chen (陳), and Zhou (周).²⁵⁶ It is thus conceivable that our Mrs. Wang and Mrs. Zhang might be daughters of resident Chinese businessmen engaged in ceramics importation. Alternately, Kawazoe Shôji has raised the possibility that Mrs. Zhang might be related to a ship captain named Zhang Cheng, who helped aid the completion of a massive sutra-copying project undertaken by one Munakata Saeki, later known as

²⁵⁴ See the Munakata family tree provided on page 129.

²⁵⁵ Batten, *Gateway*, p. 129.

²⁵⁶ Saeki Kôji (tr. Peter Shapinsky), “Chinese Trade Ceramics in Medieval Japan” in Goble et al., eds., *Tools of Culture*, p. 176.

Shikijō.²⁵⁷ Zhang Cheng's obvious connections with the Munakata family add to the plausibility of this suggestion. Whatever the case, documentary evidence (including inscriptions) suggests the women figured prominently in Munakata family life, and we may assume they came from well-to-do families themselves.²⁵⁸ Both women held and bequeathed property, and Mrs. Zhang even adopted a son, Mutō Tameyori, the second biological son of the governor (*kami*) of Chikuzen, Mutō Sukeyori.²⁵⁹

Mrs. Zhang is famously associated with a bitter inheritance dispute that consumed her sons (both biological and adopted) following the death of her husband, Munakata Ujitada. Ujitada had held “landlord’s rights” (*myōshu shiki*, 名主職) to three separate properties located on the large conglomerate of family land known as Munakata Estate (宗像莊).²⁶⁰ When he died, they passed to Mrs. Zhang, but in 1220, she drafted a will

²⁵⁷ Kawazoe, *Kyūshū no chūsei sekai*, p. 99. He does not speculate on the background of Mrs. Wang.

²⁵⁸ One such inscription is found on the left side of the aforementioned Amida Nyorai stele (its thickness is about 22 cm, so there is plenty of room to write). It expresses her personal wish that Mrs. Wang and her son Ujikuni might enjoy rebirth in the Land of Utmost Bliss, and that she herself, along with her descendants, would enjoy a peaceful life. See Goble et al eds., *Tools of Culture*, p. 9, and *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 454-5.

²⁵⁹ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 454. Bakufu law allowed women to inherit and bequeath property and to adopt sons. See *Goseibai Shikimoku*, articles 18 and 23, for representative legal thinking on these matters. Significantly, article 23 notes that there is a longstanding precedent for women adopting sons when they themselves are bereft of children, but since Mrs. Zhang did have children of her own, this was clearly not a necessary condition for maternal adoption. Mrs. Zhang's decision to take Mutō Tameyori as an adoptive son probably reflects a larger pattern of establishing kinship connections with the occupants of important local posts.

²⁶⁰ *Myōshu shiki* are sometimes rendered as “cultivator’s rights,” but this implies a lower status for the *myōshu* than they actually held. Thomas Conlan has noted that by the early fourteenth century, the term *myōshu* was being used synonymously with *jinushi* (地主), “landlord,” hence I

that bequeathed them to her adopted son Tameyori, by that time known as the lay monk Kakuzen. Apparently, the dispute over the properties had become so intense that Ujinaka had planned to kill his younger brother Ujiichi in a surprise night raid (夜討).²⁶¹ Needless to say, when his plans were revealed, it caused an irreparable rift with his mother, who promptly disinherited him. According to Munakata Ujinari, a cousin and rough contemporary of Ujinaka, Mrs. Zhang died young deeply wounded by her oldest son's unfilialty.²⁶²

The dispute, however, did not end there. In 1268, fully four decades after Ujinaka was disinherited, his widow sued for the rights to the three properties, claiming to have a will from Mrs. Zhang written in 1221. When they brought their case before the Kamakura authorities, the Bakufu requested that Ujinari, who was still alive, examine the document and determine if it was legitimate. Ujinari sent back a detailed report on both the document and the general history of the dispute; by this time, he must have been one of the few people still alive who had personal knowledge of the case from its inception. Ujinari stated that the will proffered by Ujinaka's widow was indeed a forgery, citing a

have opted to call *myōshu shiki* "landlord rights." See Conlan, *State of War*, p. 115 and note 301 below.

²⁶¹ It is not precisely clear why Ujinaka wanted to kill Ujiichi, as the latter doesn't seem to be involved in any of the later litigation concerning the properties. Likewise, it is not explicitly clear why an adopted son was chosen as the inheritor, though the decision was apparently directed in part by Munakata Ujikuni, Mrs. Zhang's brother-in-law and presiding shrine head. See *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 454.

²⁶² See Bun'ei 5 (1265).7.3 ukebumi (*KI* 13: 10274).

number of errors and inconsistencies in the document.²⁶³ A year later, the custodian (*azukari-dokoro*) on the properties, Tachibana Mochitsune, threw out her claims and, on behalf of the estates' patron, issued a formal confirmation (*ando*) of Tameyori's rights.²⁶⁴ He made clear that the judgment of the patron was final and ordered Ujinaka's widow (along with her sons Ujimura and Ujitô) to cease their unjust attempt to obtain the rights to Sukeyori's properties. Evidently, this did not stop Ujinaka's widow, for two years after that, he again issued a desist order demanding that she stop her "outrageous suit" (*ranso*, 濫訴). This second order, it seems, finally concluded the litigation concerning Ujinaka's objection to his mother's initial bequeath. Yet while this particular dispute simmered *within* the family for two generations, other legal entanglements pitted Munakata family members against outside rivals, as the following example illustrates.

²⁶³ Ibid. Among the most obvious errors present in the forged bequeath is the statement that the three properties had been *bought* by Mrs. Zhang and Ujitada; according to Ujinari, the lands were originally endowed to the Munakata Shrine by Munakata Ujitaka and Ujifusa (the seventh and twelfth shrine heads, respectively), and were "fundamental shrine lands" and thus never salable in the first place.

²⁶⁴ See Bun'ei 6 (1269).² Chikuzen Munakata shô azukari-dokoro kudashibumi (*KI*, 14: 10390). Another term from the *shôen* nomenclature, the *azukari-dokoro* was a manager appointed to the estate to represent the proprietor's interests. For our case, the relationships get even more baroque, as the estates' patron (*honke*) was the retired empress Kisshi, wife of Emperor Go-saga, and the central proprietor (*ryôke*) was the powerful Saionji family. The *azukari-dokoro* represented both the patron and the central proprietor, though his connection to the latter was closer.

Power and Position on a Munakata Territory:

The Case of Xie Guoming (謝國明)

One of the most fascinating disputes of the Kamakura era to concern Munakata lands was the mid-thirteenth century battle waged over rights to the territory of Oronoshima, a miniscule island 42 kilometers northwest of Hakata Bay.²⁶⁵ According to an edict issued by Hôjô Nagatoki in 1253, the Munakata family claimed that it had held jurisdiction (*seibai*) over the island “since antiquity” (*mukashi yori*).²⁶⁶ Oronoshima is further south than most Munakata properties; this fact, coupled with the absence of major pre-modern shrine facilities, suggests a more recent Munakata presence than that observed on Ôshima and Okinoshima. It is abundantly clear that the island’s primary value lay in its position: Oronoshima is ideally situated for use as a base of operations in the international commercial networks that converged at the port of Hakata.²⁶⁷

Legal troubles began on the island sometime in the late 1240s. For reasons that remain unclear, the acting custodian (*azukari-dokoro dai*) on the property, Miura Tsunemura, issued an unauthorized edict (*kudashibumi*) to the Chinese businessman Xie

²⁶⁵ Oronoshima is shaped rather like a gourd and is approximately 1.2 km in total length, making it far smaller in area than even Okinoshima.

²⁶⁶ Kenchô 5 (1253).5.3., Hôjô Nagatoki kakikudashi (*KI*, 10: 7551).

²⁶⁷ Kawazoe, “Munakata-shi no taigai bôeki,” p. 292.

Guoming confirming him as a *jitô* on Oronoshima.²⁶⁸ Miura Tsunemura is probably related to Miura Yasumura, who served as custodian for other Munakata properties.²⁶⁹ The Miura were a famous eastern warrior family; as custodial officers on Munakata lands, they were regarded as willful and domineering.²⁷⁰ The specific nature of Guoming's relationship to the Munakata is difficult to ascertain, but he seems to have been initially vested with a certain level of authority over property on Oronoshima, possibly in exchange for acting on the shrine's behalf in matters of trade.²⁷¹ The Miura, too, likely wanted to deepen their association with Guoming, and one may intelligently raise the possibility that Tsunemura's bold act of appointing Guoming *jitô* was born out of a need to attract allies as the family faced destruction at the hands of the increasingly powerful Hôjô.

Alternatively, there is also cause to posit Guoming as having actively sought more comprehensive rights to the land than those originally recognized under the terms of his employment with the Munakata. An official Bakufu directive issued in 1252 orders Guoming to cease calling himself a *jitô* and interfering with Munakata management of Oronoshima.²⁷² In this document, he is cited as having "convinced" Tsunemura to grant

²⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 295. Members of the Miura family are seen serving as *azikari-dokoro* on Munakata properties after the Jôkyû War of 1221 up until their destruction at the hands of the Hôjô in 1247.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 295.

²⁷⁰ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 443.

²⁷¹ Kawazoe, "Munakata-shi no taigai bôeki," p. 296.

him the confirmation edict; the language used seems to place more of the onus for the violation on Guoming than on Tsunemura.²⁷³ At any rate, regardless of who was more at fault, they both must have known they were overstepping their authority. Yet the Munakata family appears not to have taken legal action immediately. It has been suggested that while Guoming was still alive, he continued to perform his duties as he had in the past, and that it was only after his death that income ceased being remitted to the Munakata Shrine and custodial duties on Oronoshima stagnated.²⁷⁴ In this view, Guoming's initial unauthorized enfeoffment was not, in itself, the most proximate cause of the Munakata lawsuit. Of course, the Munakata seemed to harbor less-than-warm feelings toward the Miura, and one might imagine that they delayed seeking legal redress in order to both solidify their case and avoid entanglement in the conflict that raged between the Miura and the Hôjô in the late 1240s.

After Guoming died, the dispute over Oronoshima became even more complex, as his Japanese widow vied for control over the property with both Munakata Ujinari and a third claimant, Mihara Tanenobu. The Mihara were a wealthy family from the province

²⁷² Kenchô 4 (1252).7.12 Kantô migyôsho (*KI*, 10: 7458).

²⁷³ Specifically, the compound verb 語取, read according to *kundoku* conventions as 'katarai-toru,' is used to describe Guoming's receipt of Tsunemura's edict. This word means "to prevail upon" or "to make someone an ally." Usually the object is a person, but in our case it is the *kudashibumi*, leading to the interpretation that Guoming "talked Tsunemura into" giving him the edict.

²⁷⁴ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 673.

of Chikugo, located to the east of Chikuzen.²⁷⁵ Oronoshima is relatively far removed from traditional Mihara territory, and it is not clear why Tanenobu entered into litigation over the rights to the island.²⁷⁶ It is conceivable that its position, which presented more direct access to the Hakata-South China concourse than was afforded by the province of Chikugo, might have attracted the attention of the Mihara family.²⁷⁷ Whatever the case, Munakata Ujinari's complaint alleged that Tanenobu "refused to take direction" from the Munakata Shrine, suggesting he had been previously appointed to Oronoshima in some capacity by the Munakata.²⁷⁸ In response, Tanenobu proffered the excuse that his noncompliance was because his dispute with Guoming's widow had yet to be settled.²⁷⁹ The Bakufu's 1253 response orders the local magistrate to inform Ujinari that he is to await the decision of the shogunal authorities. Unfortunately, this is where the documentary record ends, leaving the final denouement of the case a mystery. However, a document issued in 1334 by the judicial department of the Kenmu government indicates

²⁷⁵ Kawazoe, "Munakata-shi no taigai bôeki," p. 299.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 298-9.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 299.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 299.

²⁷⁹ Kenchô 5 (1253).5.3 Hôjô Nagatoki kakikudashi (*KI*, 10: 7551). Kawazoe Shôji provides the *kundoku* rendering and a brief analysis of this document on pages 295 and 299 of "Munakata-shi no taigai bôeki."

that Oronoshima was a Munakata Shrine possession.²⁸⁰ This is good evidence that Ujinari was ultimately successful in his suit against Tanenobu and Guoming's widow.

The litigation surrounding Oronoshima is indicative of the type of conflicts over land rights arising out of the multilayered structure of ownership and authority seen during the Kamakura Period. In this sense, it is not unusual. But beyond this, the case is made rather unique by the involvement of Xie Guoming. He is generally ascribed the title *gǎngshou* (綱首, Jp. *kôshu*), which identifies him as the head of a Chinese commercial association. The dates of his birth and death are not known, but as can be inferred from legal documents, he seems to have died sometime around 1252. His widow is referred to only as “the nun,” and although little is known of her, she is thought to have been Japanese.²⁸¹ Incidentally, her involvement in the Oronoshima case serves to reinforce a pattern already observed in the dispute between Ujinaka's widow and Mutô Sukeyori, namely that women could, and often did, seek title to property through the Kamakura judiciary. At a personal level, Guoming was a worldly figure who patronized religious institutions in both China and Japan, and his financial backing of the Japanese monk Enni Ben'en (1202-1280) was instrumental in facilitating the construction of the Rinzaï Zen temple Jôtenji in Hakata.²⁸² It is known that he purchased a tract of land from the Hakozaki Shrine, then endowed it to the newly built Jôtenji, further helping secure its

²⁸⁰ Kawazoe, “Munakata-shi no taigai bôeki,” p. 299.

²⁸¹ Ibid., p. 294.

²⁸² Goble et al., *Tools of Culture*, pp. 9-10.

economic base.²⁸³ Much like the great moguls of modern times, Guoming blended shrewd business practices with philanthropic activities, and he stands as an illustrious representative of Kyushu's transnational character during the Kamakura era.

²⁸³ Kawazoe, "Munakata-shi no taigai bôeki," p. 298.

CHAPTER V

REGULATING THE MUNAKATA ENTERPRISE:
THE *MUNAKATA-SHI KOTOGAKI*

The Kamakura Period was a veritable golden age for the Munakata Shrine, particularly on the economic front. Yet as the Munakata enterprise grew in size and wealth, problems stemming from the separation of ownership and control on shrine properties demanded attention. These and other issues were addressed in a remarkable document known as the *Munakata-shi Kotogaki* (宗像氏事書) or “the Written Articles of the Munakata Family,” the analysis of which is the subject of this chapter.²⁸⁴ Composed in 1313, the *Kotogaki* was a regulatory code governing the lands of the Munakata Shrine. Its principal architect was Munakata Ujimori (氏盛), the 49th shrine head. At the time the *Kotogaki* was written, Ujimori had just ceded his position as family premier, including headship of the shrine, to his still-young primary heir Shô Hosshi-maru, who was known

²⁸⁴ The code is also known as the *Munakata-sha Kotogaki* (宗像社事書) or “the Written Articles of the Munakata Shrine.” Because the document itself has essentially no religious content save for the customary prefatory exhortation, the more common 宗像氏事書 is probably the most appropriate.

in adulthood as Ujinaga, then later as Ujinori.²⁸⁵ Fifty-four years before the *Kotogaki* was composed, another set of statutes referred to simply as the Great Pronouncement (literally the “Great Placard,” 大札), is known to have existed.²⁸⁶ The *Kotogaki* makes reference to the Great Pronouncement on multiple occasions; its invocation may be seen to enhance the legitimacy of the newly drafted *Kotogaki* by situating it within a pre-existing and hence familiar legal framework.

In terms of content, traditional scholarship has long recognized the *Kotogaki* as an important example of “resident proprietor law” (在地領主法).²⁸⁷ Its thirteen articles take up issues of land management, tax policy, and the use of private military resources. The Munakata shrine complex and its attendant properties comprised a large organization whose smooth operation depended on uniform administrative guidelines that went beyond mere entreaties for peasants to be frugal and higher-ups to be virtuous. To this end, the *Kotogaki* is more than a mission statement or collection of sumptuary exhortations, but constitutes an attempt at full-fledged legislation governing the use of family resources. Ujimori clearly possessed thorough knowledge of the political and

²⁸⁵ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 446.

²⁸⁶ We may infer that it was publicly posted on placards (or at least on one large, prominently placed placard), but its specific contents have been lost to history.

²⁸⁷ See, for instance, Ishii Susumi, *Nihon chūsei kokkashi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976), pp. 455-66. The term *ryōshu* (領主) indicates a local lord who possesses significant autonomy and authority over the administration of his lands. In the *shōen* hierarchy, the *ryōshu* stands above the *myōshu* but below the *ryōke* and *honke*. See Sato, “The Early Development of the Shōen,” pp. 104-5.

economic forces operating on Munakata interests, and the *Kotogaki* is a testament to his leadership and foresight.

In terms of composition, the text is written in *kanbun* and evinces a style very similar to that of the *Goseibai Shikimoku* and other legal texts of the era. Syntactically, the *Kotogaki* conforms closely to the conventions of classical Chinese, but, as the *Shikimoku* often does, it draws frequently on the native Japanese lexicon. This means that while the basic parts of speech are generally arranged according to Chinese grammar, the words themselves are often unique to the Japanese socio-political experience. The *Kotogaki* thus belongs properly to the linguistic category of *Waka-kanbun* (和化漢文) or “Japanized” *kanbun*, even though from a grammatical point of view it evinces close similarity to *jun-kanbun* (純漢文) or “pure” *kanbun* writings.²⁸⁸ It must be remembered that the *Kotogaki* was not simply meant to be perused silently, but to be read aloud; and while it is very difficult to reconstruct the precise *kundoku* rules that would have obtained at the time of its composition, it is nonetheless clear that aural comprehensibility was a central aim of the authors. From a linguistic standpoint, this is very important, for while *kanbun* was chosen as the orthography of record, it was, in this case, being used primarily to represent what was essentially formal spoken Japanese.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁸ The linguistic range of *Waka-kanbun* is naturally very large; the term is often used synonymously with *hentai kanbun* (変体漢文) and applied to the kind of writing that appears in courtier diaries, etc. However the *Kotogaki* is structurally more “Chinese” than those examples of *Waka-kanbun*; like the *Shikimoku*, its inclusion in this category stems more from its vocabulary than its grammar.

According to Seno Seiichirô, the oldest version of the *Kotogaki* extant today is probably not the original, but rather a copy (案) from about 150 years later.²⁹⁰ The contents of the *Kotogaki*, however, are entirely consistent with what is known of the Munakata Shrine during the Kamakura Period, meaning that even if it is a copy, it is likely an accurate representation of shrine organization and statutory thinking in the early fourteenth century. The following translation is based on the texts given in Ishii Susumu et al, *Chûsei Seiji Shakai Shisô*, and volume two of the *Munakata Jinjashi*.²⁹¹ Both

²⁸⁹ The difficulty of reconstructing historical *kundoku* patterns is noted in Kita Takashi, “Wakanbun ni okeru ‘shimu’ no ichi yôhô,” p. 97. Insofar as dialectical differences between regions resulted in considerable variability of pronunciation, there were no truly universal “*kundoku* conventions” governing the reading of *kanbun* texts. With the *Kotogaki* and similar works, the *kanbun* itself served as a common written medium, but the way in which certain words or phrases in the text would have been read aloud by a *shôen* administrator native to Kyushu could be somewhat different from the way in which an official from the Kamakura Bakufu would have read the same word or phrase. This issue is addressed in Thomas D. Conlan, “Traces of the Past: Documents, Literacy, and Liturgy in Medieval Japan,” in Gordon M. Berger, Andrew Edmund Goble, Lorraine F. Harrington, and G. Cameron Hurst III, eds., *Currents in Medieval Japanese History: Essays in Honor of Jeffery P. Mass* (Los Angeles, CA: Figueroa Press, 2009).

²⁹⁰ Seno Seiichirô, “Kankô shiryôshû seiri no hitsuyôsei,” pp. 21-2. Seno cites three factors that suggest to him that the current version of the *Kotogaki* is a copy: First, there are misprints and lacunae in the text that would not likely be present in the original; on this point, Seno is critical of Ishii Susumu and Satô Shin’ichi for acknowledging these errors but still treating the piece as if it were the original document (正文). Second, Seno notes that the *Kotogaki* is absent from an index of Munakata family documents compiled in 1409. However, according to the *Munakata Jinjashi*, there are no less than 73 extant documents dating from before 1409 that, while preserved in other sources, are not found in this index, making the *Kotogaki*’s absence perhaps less shocking than Seno posits it to be. Finally, attached to the manuscript of the *Kotogaki* is a tag (押紙) that reads “One hundred and forty-two years, from the second year of Shôwa (1313) to the third year of Kyôtoku (1454).” The interpretation of this is open to discussion, and Seno himself acknowledges that neither this nor the other two facts yield indisputable conclusions, but argues that the *Kotogaki*, along with many other documents that have been reproduced in *katsuji* form, are “documents in need of further study” (要検討文書) and should be approached with due caution by researchers.

²⁹¹ See *CSSS*, vol. 1, pp. 177-84 and *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, pp. 443-9.

sources provide brief but informative annotations to the text, most of which have been reproduced here. Where appropriate, some of these have been expanded upon. Owing to the linguistic importance of the *Kotogaki*, I have also included occasional notes concerning its style and vocabulary not found in either of the source texts.



The Munakata-shi Kotogaki

Item: Services to the gods must be performed, and devotions to the buddhas carried out; local shrines must be maintained, and temple complexes kept in repair. Additionally, various responsibilities of property management must be discharged, beginning with the promotion of agricultural productivity. Regarding every such provision, resolutely uphold the spirit of the Great Pronouncement made on the eighth day of the second month of the third year of Seiki (1257), and scrupulously carry out the orders given therein.

1. That the residents of shrine lands must follow the commands of Shô Hosshi.

Item: With respect to fellows who contravene the commands of Shô Hosshi and break

with the *Naidan* Council, regardless of whether they are kin or brethren, and irrespective of whether they are shrine priests or landowners, they shall forthwith be expelled from shrine lands.

2. Regarding delinquent payment of annual tax produce.

Item: In accordance with precedents set long ago, the delinquent party shall be censured and payment shall be demanded of him. Furthermore, as regards those who do not submit to this order, their farmland shall be confiscated and awarded to a lower ranking landholder.²⁹² Even if the amount owed is small, punishment proportional to the delinquent party's status shall be carried out.²⁹³

3. Matters pertaining to the *Naidan* Council²⁹⁴

Item: Members of the *Naidan* Council must sign an oath of allegiance and righteously

²⁹² The word rendered as lower-ranking landholders is *gesakunin* (下作人). According to Ishii (*CSSS*, vol. 1, p. 178), the term refers to individuals who ranked below the *myôshu* (名主) but still had rights to the land. The term does not denote those who actually worked the land. In the fourteenth-century, their position vis-a-vis the *myôshu* and *sakunin* (作人) was further attenuated, but they still held formal rights to income in the form of *gesaku shiki* (下作職).

²⁹³ The phrase is 可行分限之科也焉 (*bugen no toga wo okonau beki nari*). The term *bugen* is typically used to mean “social standing” or “means” in an economic sense, though it may also denote an *individual* who possesses high social standing.

²⁹⁴ The *Naidan* council was a consultative decision-making body composed of a small number of family leaders.

discharge the duties stipulated therein. There is no need to elaborate on procedures when the entire Council is in unanimous agreement; if, perchance, opinions voiced in the Council are not unanimous, the matter must be handled in consultation with elder statesmen outside the Council.²⁹⁵ However, persons who either trump up new regulations and scheme for their own gain, or who are absent on multiple occasions, must be expelled from Council membership and punished accordingly. Even if there is no specific item to be addressed, on appointed days members must convene at the *Kumonjo*, where various matters shall be brought to the floor for discussion.²⁹⁶ After Shô Hosshi reaches maturity, he shall, as a matter of course, preside over house affairs.

4. Matters pertaining to the local tax offices' accounting of rice payments used to fund official repairs and of income from Haruke and Taku.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ The “elder statesmen” (故實之人々) are thought to be senior family leaders who are well versed in matters of law and precedent but are not sitting on the *Naidan* council. See *CSSS*, p. 178 and *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 448.

²⁹⁶ The *Kumonjo* was the headquarters of the *kumon*, a class of *shôen* officials touched on in note 17 below.

²⁹⁷ These are, respectively, the Haruke Estate in Hizen Province, and the village of Taku, located on the Akama estate in Chikugo Province. Records from the 1220s use the term Haruke territory (晴氣領), and Haruke village (晴氣郷) is also seen. The term Haruke estate (晴氣保) seems to have become common by late Kamakura times. After the fall of the Heike, the property became a Fujiwara possession. But in 1271, a Fujiwara woman who had inherited the property married Munakata Nagauji, and six years later she bequeathed it to their son, Ujimori, compiler of this code. Due to their explicit mention in the *Kotogaki*, it is thought that both Haruke and Taku provided income directly to Munakata elites. See *Munakata Jinja Fukko Kiseikai*, *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, pp. 677-81. In general, the origin of the word *ho* (保), “estate” is not clear, but it is regarded as essentially equivalent to *shô* (荘), denoting private domains, and in particular those of provincial elites. See Toyama Mikio, *Chûsei no Kyûshû*, p. 39.

Item: Provisions and produce income are to be disbursed as per the written orders from the *Kumonjo*; receipts from family retainers must be taken and, balancing receipts against orders, accounts must be settled.²⁹⁸ Basing one's calculations on self-serving imperatives will absolutely not be tolerated. If an estate official detains produce scheduled for distribution, he must specify a date and advance the assets himself; if he is late in doing so, his position shall be revoked and a man of honest character appointed in his place.²⁹⁹

5. That the *benzaishi* and other officials with managerial authority such as the *kumon* and *myôshu* must not selfishly compel service from the peasantry.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ The family retainers (*katagata*, 方々) are charged with carrying out the orders of the *Kumonjo*. It is difficult to surmise their exact place within the Munakata hierarchy from the *Kotogaki* alone, but they recur frequently as figures of power and influence in the management of property and family affairs. This particular article indicates that they have mid- to upper-level authority over the manner in which assets collected as tax revenue are apportioned to public works projects and other local ventures. Clearly they are in a position to abuse their power, a fact made even more evident in articles 9 and 10, and are here admonished to keep honest accounts and refrain from apportioning resources for selfish purposes. Their role is to ensure the smooth operation of the Munakata family enterprise, but like executives in many large organizations, they are not always faithful to a “what’s best for the company” philosophy, but are evidently given to self-aggrandizing behavior.

²⁹⁹ The issue seems to be middle managers (*satanin*, 沙汰人) appropriating, or at least delaying disbursement, of officially designated assets to locales where they are needed. The article is interesting in that it does not absolutely forbid this action, but it places the onus for ensuring that the intended recipient eventually obtains the appropriate assets squarely on the *satanin*. Perhaps there were times when the *satanin* needed to legitimately withhold delivery of assets, such as when accounting discrepancies or other problems emerged; here they would be expected to exercise their best judgment regarding the situation, but were responsible for guaranteeing delivery once the problem was resolved.

³⁰⁰ It is possible to engineer English translations for medieval Japanese offices and positions, but in this case it is perhaps easier to simply use the Japanese terms and explain them. The *benzaishi* (辨濟使) were lower-level officials stationed in villages or on *shôen* and charged with overseeing the payment or settlement (hence their name) of taxes or other financial obligations. The *kumon*

Item: This is expressly forbidden and must cease once and for all. Furthermore, those who refuse to comply (with this admonition) shall have their office revoked forthwith and a more peaceable fellow shall be appointed in their place.

6. Concerning the increase of annual taxes³⁰¹

Item: This is a grave legal matter for the Munakata house. Legal attaches from our estates shall be sent to the Kanto to plead our case. In recent years, the Munakata family has taken public fields and made grants of them;³⁰² we have also taken from the produce used to pay taxes and made grants of rice. Are there not many who have received such benefices?! Now all of these must be repossessed and put toward fulfilling the annual

(公文) was another *shôen* official, typically ranked above the *shôshi* and below the *gesu*, *tadokoro*, and *azukaridokoro*, and whose duties also often dealt with tax collection. The *myôshu* (名主) were an important “class” of landlord-farmers who held authority over land (recall Mrs. Zhang’s bequeath of *myôshu-shiki*). More specifically, they held *myôden* (名田), where the *myô* denotes an organizational unit of land on which taxes and public duties (公事) were levied. They also oversaw the payment of taxes and the provision of labor at the village level, and are sometimes referred to as *shôjitô* (小地頭, “minor *jitô*”). See Zenkoku Rekishi Kyôiku Kenkyû Kyôgikai, ed., *Nihonshi B: Yôgoshû* (Tokyo: Yamakawa, 2006), and Conlan, *State of War*, pp. 114-16.

³⁰¹ In 1302, executive control over the Munakata Shrine and its lands reverted to the Kamakura Bakufu, becoming the territorial purview of the head of the Hôjô family, known as the *tokusô*; under this arrangement, they became “*tokusô* territories” (得宗領). The Hôjô assumed a position over Munakata lands that was similar in kind, though stronger in degree, than that taken by the Taira in the twelfth century. By the end of the Kamakura Period, the Hôjô held rights to 13 percent of the total land area of the island of Kyushu; coupled with their extensive holdings elsewhere, they were likely the single richest house in Japan. See Andrew Edmund Goble, *Kenmu: Go-Daigo’s Revolution*, p. 117, and *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 707-8.

³⁰² Public fields (*kuden*, 公田) refer to fields on which taxes and corvée labor were levied. It is significant, and emblematic of the Munakata family’s beneficence, that such lands were “made into grants,” an act which enriched retainers at the expense of the Munakata tax base.

tax.³⁰³ After our suit has been settled, the grants will revert to their original recipients. However, regarding those who will, as a result, be rendered without income, we will assign their case to the *Naidan* council where appropriate arrangements shall be discussed.³⁰⁴

7. Concerning services, labor, and the like performed for the envoy (*on-tsukai*) from the Kanto.

Item: Honor the duty assignments issued by the *Kumonjo* and discharge your orders without neglect. As for those fellows who are uncooperative, especially severe punishment shall be meted out.

³⁰³ Here “annual tax” (*nengu*) is prefixed by the honorific 御, making it explicit that the extra tax is being demanded by the Bakufu.

³⁰⁴ The phrase 加内談 is one of the most interesting in the text. The version of the *Kotogaki* given in the CSSS reads the phrase as *Naidan wo kuwau*. The verb *kuwau* is transitive and may mean “append/add,” “enter into membership,” or “apply,” as in to apply medical treatment to a wound. Because the *Naidan* council is a deliberative body consisting of members, it may be tempting to interpret *kuwau* as meaning “enter into membership,” “join,” or something along these lines. However, because *kuwau* is transitive, when it is used to mean “join” it carries a strong causative sense, i.e. “make (him/them) join” or “make (him/her) a member.” Hence it is likely that the normal object would be a person (the member himself), not the group of which he was being made a member, which would likely be marked by *ni*. I have thus chosen to interpret the phrase as meaning “apply the wisdom/judgment of the *Naidan* council” or “forward (a case) to the *Naidan* council.” In keeping with this interpretation, a more literal rendering of the phrase in article 6 would read “assign the *Naidan* council to the matter,” but this sounds somewhat less natural in English. Note that *kuwau* can also be collocated with *seibai*, which means legal action or judgment, in the pattern 加成就 (seibai wo kuwau). Here, the sense would be one of applying or rendering judgment. The phrase 加評定 (*hyôjô wo kuwau*), meaning to render deliberation, is also often encountered.

8. Concerning family retainers' public service as estate administrators and official delegates, and the determination of their service shifts.³⁰⁵

Item: For the time being service shall be required as each individual's present ability permits; assignment shall be determined both in accordance with economic status and on a rotating basis.³⁰⁶ Should there be persons who claim that they have obligations outside this important public service and thus decline to participate, they would constitute the epitome of disloyalty and would be punished severely. But as for those who, in performing their service, give of themselves more than they have been given and surpass their comrades, they shall be justly rewarded for their loyalty.

Next, there is the matter of determining work shifts. Written attestations of service from administrators must be checked against written attestations of service from section heads, in verification of their consistency. If someone fails to participate five or more times, they shall be penalized.³⁰⁷ As for those who are not part of a work section, that they must perform other meritworthy service has been stipulated above.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ Family retainers (*katagata*) may be called upon to serve as administrators (*zasshō*, 雑掌) or as delegates (使節, *shisetsu*) representing the Munakata Shrine and its interests.

³⁰⁶ The word translated here as rotating basis is 巡儀 (*jungi*). This is a very rare term, occurring twice in this document but nowhere else in the *Kamakura Ibun*.

³⁰⁷ As with participation in the *Naidan* council, absenteeism appears to be an issue of concern for those charged with managing a work detail as well.

³⁰⁸ This is a rather ambiguous assertion, since no preceding article in this document contains such a stipulation. One possibility, raised by Prof. Ishii, is that it refers to the Great Pronouncement mentioned in the short preamble to the *Kotogaki*.

9. Concerning the allocation of post horses and laborers to each village as per the instructions of the *tadokoro*.³⁰⁹

Item: The contents of the Great Pronouncement show that this job is the prerogative of the Munakata House. Lately, however, there are reports that retainers and other persons related to the family have been surreptitiously employing laborers and post horses. There is absolutely no excuse for this. Submit to the *Kumonjo* your half of a double-entry log detailing your use of laborers and post horses; you must take turns using these resources and manage them without favoritism, and twice per year, the logs shall be audited.³¹⁰

10. Concerning bays and islets.

Item: For family relatives to dismiss the estate functionaries and directly dispatch their own envoys to commandeer fish and other produce is extraordinarily disruptive.³¹¹ This practice must be stopped immediately. With respect to those who are reluctant to

³⁰⁹ The *tadokoro* was an administrative organ that dealt directly with issues of paddyland management and other agricultural concerns. The term also denotes that organ's chief officer, who occupies a relatively high-level administrative position on *shôen* lands. Traditionally, the *tadokoro* ranks below the *azukari-dokoro* but above the *gesu*, *kumon*, and *shôshi* (莊司). His duties might include overseeing cadastral surveys on *shôen* lands and dealing with tax collection.

³¹⁰ The issue here appears to be not so much that family relatives use collective resources, but rather the manner of their use. The article directs those who have managerial responsibility over the allocation of laborers and horses to be responsible in their duties and ensure that these resources go where they are most needed. As in article 4, the importance of accurate records is stressed, with the bi-annual audit serving to dissuade fraudulent or irresponsible accounting.

³¹¹ Again, it is the irksome *katagata* who are transgressing the boundaries of their authority and need to be reined in.

comply, surely they would adopt a different stance in the presence of their master Shô Hosshi.³¹² With respect to those who are closely connected to such persons, they above all should not remain on intimate terms with them.³¹³

11. Concerning mountain entrances.

Item: Mount Yamaguchi, Mount Tarumi, and Mount Yamada are mountains not covered in this regulation. Were regulations to be put on them, it would actually be a source of bother to the farmers. Outside of these, access to Byôbu Peak, Gokurakuji Mountain, Mochiyama, Takayama and Teikenji Mountain must be stringently regulated because they are sources of drinking and irrigation water.³¹⁴ This regulation shall be conveyed to the public by land managers and other officials.

³¹² The portion translated here as “surely they would adopt a different stance in the presence of their master Shô Hosshi” reads 向惣官松法師、可存異儀歟, which literally means something like “facing the shrine headmaster Shô Hosshi, would they not adopt a different stance?!” The idea seems to be that the zealous *katagata* would be shamed or intimidated into reforming their conduct if they were actually face to face with their young leader, or at least that they would act differently in his presence. In article 19 of the *Goseibai Shikimoku*, we see the phrase *shisoku no gi wo zonzu* (存子息之儀), which means “to behave as a son” (i.e. to be dutiful and filial). Hence, it seems reasonable to interpret *igi wo zonzu* (存異儀) as meaning “to behave differently” or, more literally, “to know (and hence behave according to) a different standard.”

³¹³ This closing injunction is a warning to the friends and loved ones of the insubordinate *katagata* that they risk guilt by association if they “open their hearts” (打解心) to them.

³¹⁴ Mochiyama and Takayama are themselves mountains, but unlike the other mountains, where the suffix 山 clearly functions to express “mount,” Mochiyama and Takayama seem to be treated as set place-names, making the transliterations “Mount Mochi” or “Mount Taka” somewhat awkward.

12. Concerning post horses³¹⁵

Item: In accordance with regulations,³¹⁶ orders must be discharged without the slightest neglect. Should there be any who are found in violation, the preceding articles will be upheld and the appropriate punishment strictly applied.

13. Concerning body armor and other such military equipment, and also horses.

Item: When an emergency threatens the realm, armor shall be distributed widely; after conditions settle down, the armor must be returned to military supply depots. The private use of military supplies will absolutely not be tolerated, even if the user is a brother or relative of the Munakata family. Next, in regards to horses, the same rules apply.

The foregoing articles are as written. However, it is surely impossible to account for all the details that may have been left out of the Great Proclamation and thus not published in this code. This being the case, one must uphold the spirit of the *Shikimoku* and make appeal to established precedents; follow where logic leads, and rely on what circumstances suggest.³¹⁷ Appeal to the *Naidan* council, and duly discharge the directives

³¹⁵ The term translated as “post horses” here is *hayauma* (早馬), whereas the term that appears in article nine is *denma* (伝馬).

³¹⁶ The term rendered as “regulations” is *mamoribumi* (守文). It seems to mean “writings to be upheld” and it is thought that it may refer to the previously encountered Great Pronouncement, though this is not certain. See *CSSS*, p. 183.

thereof. In ascertaining the extent of loyalty or disloyalty, one must establish the degree of sincerity versus insincerity.³¹⁸ Determining right from wrong constitutes the essence of governance, and rendering rewards and punishments is central to ruling. To this end, the articles of this code are as stipulated above.

1/09/1313

Signed, Munakata Ujimori



In form and function, the *Kotogaki* stands between official government legislation and family codes (*kakun*, 家訓), being generally shorter than the former but longer and more legalistic than the latter. The *Kotogaki* provides a window into land management, which was characterized by a plethora of offices and officials, and into the structures of Munakata family authority. At the top of the family pyramid stood the shrine head and the *Naidan* council. Under the authority of the *Naidan* were various administrative organs, including the *kumonjo*, the *tadokoro*, and, although not mentioned in the

³¹⁷ The *Shikimoku* most likely refers to the *Goseibai Shikimoku*, which served as a model of legal composition during this period and for centuries after.

³¹⁸ In other words, sincerity (感), or the lack thereof, is an important element in determining someone's loyalty (忠). The parallelism is elegant and well constructed along Chinese lines, though somewhat cumbersome in English.

Kotogaki, the *kebiishi-dokoro* (檢非違使所).³¹⁹ Judging from article three, at the time the *Kotogaki* was written the *Naidan* seems to have been acting as the primary instrument of executive power, a position that it would cede to Shô Hosshi after he matured. It is not clear when the *Naidan* council originally came into being, but documents attest to “deliberative sessions” (*hyôjô*, 評定) being held by Munakata leaders as early as 1277.³²⁰

From a structural standpoint, the *Naidan* is seen as an analogue to the Kamakura Bakufu’s *Hyôjôshû*, a powerful decision-making body established by Hôjô Yasutoki in 1225.³²¹ In some ways, the comparison is valid: the stipulation that the *Naidan* would surrender ultimate executive authority to Shô Hosshi upon his coming of age suggests that, in general, the shrine head was seen as the highest arbiter of family affairs. In this context, the shrine head was to the *Naidan* what the Hôjô regent was to the *Hyôjôshû*.³²² Yet in other areas, the two bodies were run somewhat differently. It is clear that the *Hyôjôshû* routinely operated with less than its full membership present.³²³ In the case of

³¹⁹ Ishii Susumu, *Nihon Chûsei Kokka no Kenkyû*, p. 466, note 10. The *kebiishi-dokoro* was responsible for law enforcement and policing on the estates; Ishii notes that its existence is attested to by other documents preserved in Munakata archives.

³²⁰ Ishii Susumu, *Nihon Chûsei Kokka no Kenkyû*, p. 460.

³²¹ *Ibid.* p. 461.

³²² See Andrew Goble, “The Hôjô and Consultative Government,” p. 174. Goble demonstrates convincingly that the composition of the *Hyôjôshû* militated against its being truly “consultative” (defined here as providing a forum in which the interests of a wide array of Kamakura vassals were represented). Unfortunately, no data exist on who actually served on the *Naidan* council, so its composition remains unknown. It is, however, highly likely that appointments to the council were the prerogative of the shrine head, meaning that it probably served more to reinforce than to check the shrine head’s power.

the *Naidan*, repeated absences constituted grounds for dismissal and punishment. This stipulation suggests that absenteeism was a significant concern, and that members were expected to prioritize attendance over other responsibilities.

Among the most historically valuable attributes of the *Kotogaki* is the insight it provides into vassalage relations at the family level. In article six, we see that the Munakata family is in a difficult financial situation and must temporarily suspend its “beneficent grants” (*onkyû*, 恩給). Examples of *onkyû* mentioned in the *Kotogaki* include taxable fields and rice, but the term almost certainly subsumed a wider range of gifts and enfeoffments.³²⁴ Even more significant, article eight makes clear that “service” (*hōkō*, 奉公) is rendered “according to one’s means” (依所帶之分限), that it is expected to be commensurate with the benefices received from the shrine (社恩), and that especially exemplary service (beyond what is expected) demonstrates loyalty and is thus grounds for further reward (忠賞). Very few documents provide concrete examples of exactly what *hōkō* could entail, though in one instance cited by Ishii, performing night-watch duty apparently qualified.³²⁵ Ishii speculates that, in addition to the aforementioned paddy fields and rice, the primary means of granting *onkyû* was through appointment to positions or offices such as *bensaishi*, *kumon*, *myōshu*, and the ever-

³²³ Goble, “The Hōjō and Consultative Government,” pp. 172-3.

³²⁴ Ishii, *Nihon Chūsei Kokkashi*, p. 462.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 462. The document referenced is an *ukebumi* dated 1240 and sent from a man named Mitsusada of Taniyama District to the *jitō* with jurisdiction over that district. In return for being appointed the *jitō*’s deputy (*daikan*), he agrees to perform night-watch duty.

nebulous category of middle managers known as *satanin*.³²⁶ Of course, failure to render service adequately was grounds for punishment (the details of which are never specified), and article two makes apparent that Munakata elites ultimately maintained the right to revoke property from vassals who, even after censure for delinquency, still failed to pay their taxes. In sum, the Munakata family and its retainers were bound together by service and reward, an arrangement that epitomizes a feudal relationship.

³²⁶ Ibid. p. 463.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

By the time the *Kotogaki* was written, the expansion of Hôjô power had already begun to dampen the economic prosperity enjoyed by the Munakata in the early days of the Kamakura Period. Of the *Kotogaki*'s thirteen articles, none speaks with more passion than the sixth. On one level, Ujimori displays the confident resolve of a family leader determined to see his house through a period of crisis; on another, there is a palpable sense of tension and uncertainty over the future of the family's economic identity and its relationship with Bakufu authorities. Yet despite these difficulties, the Munakata Shrine did not fade from the medieval Japanese landscape when the Kamakura Period ended; in concluding this essay, a brief outline of post-Kamakura developments will help contextualize the analysis undertaken in the preceding chapters by situating it within the broader span of Munakata history.

Despite their status as Kamakura vassals, when the Bakufu was threatened by Emperor Go-Daigo's revolution, the Munakata chose to ally themselves with the latter,

and even participated in the attack on the Chinzei Tandai.³²⁷ After this, they received a direct edict (*rinji*) from Go-Daigo formally confirming their hereditary suzerainty over shrine lands.³²⁸ When the relationship between Go-Daigo and his erstwhile general Ashikaga Takauji soured, the Munakata followed the example of several Kyushu warrior houses and offered their support to Takauji.³²⁹ In short, their navigation of the tumult of the 1330s was superb. For much of the Muromachi Period, the Munakata served as vassals of the powerful Ôuchi family, and between 1412 and 1504, they participated in 46 overseas commercial voyages under Ôuchi direction,³³⁰ indicating that their seafaring roots were not effaced by the social flux of the high middle ages.

However the fortunes of the Munakata would collapse abruptly in the late sixteenth century. In 1551, Ôuchi Yoshitaka was overthrown by his vassal, Sue Harukata, and before the decade was out, the Sue were annihilated by the expanding Môri, who also joined battle with the Ôtomo of Bungo Province.³³¹ The further involvement of the Ryûzôji clan of Hizen Province turned northern Kyushu into a war

³²⁷ Masaki, *Munakata Taisha*, p. 111. The Chinzei Tandai was a base for deputies of the Kamakura Bakufu located in Hakata.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 111. The alliances Kyushu warriors maintained with either the Kenmu imperium or Ashikaga Takauji could shift rapidly. See Goble, *Kenmu*, pp. 252-4.

³³⁰ Masaki, p. 112.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 112. A brief overview of the battles involving the Ôuchi, Ôtomo, and Mori is given in Hirano and Iida, eds., *Fukuoka-ken no rekishi*, pp. 116-122.

zone.³³² Throughout this time, Munakata Ujisada, the 80th shrine head, was able to adroitly protect Munakata properties from depredation. In 1586, however, he suddenly died of illness; having no heirs, the main Munakata lineage was summarily extinguished.³³³ The next year, Toyotomi Hideyoshi placed the island of Kyushu under his direct control and confiscated the entire portfolio of Munakata landholdings.³³⁴ The Munakata Shrine as an independent economic institution was utterly ruined; unable to provide income sufficient to support their previous compliment of vassals, many Munakata retainers and even shrine personnel left to seek employment elsewhere.³³⁵

The Edo Period brought peace, but not a return to prosperity for the Munakata. The daimyo of Fukuoka Domain (in which Munakata District was located) endowed the shrine with an income of 50 *koku* per year; the sum was increased to 330 *koku* soon thereafter, but even this was a very far cry from the resources the establishment commanded in earlier times.³³⁶ The Munakata Shrine would pass most of the Edo Period quietly as a provincial shrine, but the greatest foreign policy crisis to confront Japan in over a millennium would help pull it from its nadir. The historic association of the Munakata goddesses with the protection of Japan was reified by Tokugawa authorities in

³³² Masaki, p. 112.

³³³ Miya, ed., *Umi no Shôsôin Okinoshima*, p. 168.

³³⁴ Masaki, p. 112; *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol 3, p. 118.

³³⁵ Masaki, p. 112.

³³⁶ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 733.

the wake of Commodore Perry's arrival in 1853. The Munakata Shrine was one of 33 shrines commissioned to offer prayers for national security; these observances continued for eleven years and were held at all three principal Munakata shrine sites.³³⁷

After the Meiji Restoration, Munakata Shrine authorities worked hard to raise the status of their establishment under the Meiji government's system of shrine ranking; their efforts were finally rewarded in 1901, when the shrine was accorded the highest rank possible.³³⁸ That the Munakata Shrine was once again among the nation's elite religious institutions is attested to by a 1936 lease agreement between the shrine and the Imperial Japanese Army. Recognizing the strategic utility provided by Okinoshima, the army requested they be allowed to conduct land surveys, install gun emplacements, and construct military installations on the island. Shrine authorities were concerned about the proposal, and negotiations with the Ministry of the Interior dragged on for months, but in the end, with times being what they were, such a request could not ultimately be refused. In May of 1937, an agreement was reached under which Okinoshima would be leased to the army in accordance with the following conditions:

1. As a holy vessel (神體), Okinoshima is among the most solemn of religious sites. Recognizing this, it is expected that military personnel and those staying on the island will cause no hindrance to the activities of worship at Okitsu Shrine and will abide by the customs enumerated below, which have been observed since ancient times.

³³⁷ Ibid., p. 169.

³³⁸ *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 571.

- a. Upon landing, all persons must bathe in the sea and change into new footwear.
- b. On the island, persons must not spit, urinate, or defecate in random places, and they must be vigilant to not start fires.
- c. Plants, trees, earth, and rocks absolutely must not be removed from the island.
- d. Persons in mourning must not land on the island.
- e. Wives and girls must not be brought onto the island.

2. As to the construction of facilities on tracts of land under lease, in accordance with ancient practice and barring unavoidable circumstances, foliage must not be destroyed and the geometry of the land must not be altered.

3. The tracts of land that have been leased to the army are outlined on a separate piece of paper; they include all areas not colored green. However, the Munakata Shrine will not interfere with the army's construction of a road between the Okitsu Shrine site and the area where purification ceremonies are held.³³⁹

The end of the war brought uncertainty to the Munakata Shrine. The Meiji-Shōwa system of shrine ranking was formally abolished under the Allied Occupation, effectively rendering moot 80 years of efforts to reestablish the institution within a formal rubric of government recognition. However, private ventures aimed at preserving the shrine's heritage, coupled with an explosion of scholarly attention regarding the shrine's cultural treasures and ritual sites, ensured that its recent gains would not be lost.

Throughout the 1960s and 70s, thanks largely to the work of archaeologists, the ancient

³³⁹ The contract is given in original text in *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 1, p. 178.

roots of the Munakata clan and the cult of the three goddesses was revealed in greater detail. Scholars further took note of Munakata participation in the cultural concourse linking the Japanese archipelago to the Asian mainland.

Not surprisingly, the reputation of the Munakata Shrine increased in tandem with these developments. In a pattern representative of the international image cultivated by nearby Fukuoka City, both Munakata City and the Munakata Shrine itself emphasize the area's historic participation in transcultural ventures, citing the importance of Munakata territory as a window through which foreign trade and high culture flowed into the archipelago.³⁴⁰ While Batten rightly cautions us against applying this trope to all historical eras, its general thrust is not inaccurate. From early archipelagan kings, the Munakata clan received offerings in the form of foreign prestige goods, and by the dawn of the medieval era, the family had taken on a bivalent identity as both the custodians of an ancient religious tradition and a local economic powerhouse with international ties. Few institutions could better represent the cultural dynamism that characterized western Kyushu, and few have sunk such deep roots into the Japanese religious landscape while partaking so fully of the macroculture of eastern Asia.

³⁴⁰ Munakata Taisha online, http://www.munakata-taisha.or.jp/html/history_2.html; Munakata City online, <http://www.city.munakata.lg.jp/e-shigai/sumouyo03.html>. On Fukuoka's self-image as an international city, see Batten, "Cross-border Traffic," p. 357.

Future Research

Several of the topics touched upon in this thesis are worthy of lengthier exposition, beginning with the archaeology of Okinoshima. The fundamental importance of this site to early Japanese political and religious history was completely unknown to me when I began this study of the Munakata family; I simply happened upon it due to its association with the ancient Munakata clan and their tutelary goddesses. There are several unsolved problems surrounding the history of ritual performance on Okinoshima, two of which were mentioned in chapter one. These are (1) an apparent severe dip in ritual practice in the late sixth century, and (2) the final cessation of ritual practice in the ninth. Explicating this pattern of evolution and eventual decline may shed light on other facets of archipelagan history, most notably the changing structures of kingship and political authority; the discoveries in *kofun* tombs have contributed to our understanding of these things, and it seems that those made on Okinoshima can do the same.

Another closely related issue concerns close similarity between the grave goods found frequently in *kofun* tumuli and the goods used as ritual offerings on Okinoshima. This similarity has been used to support the argument that no significant distinction was made between natural “spirits” (神) and human “souls” (靈魂) until at least the sixth century; without such a distinction, the theory goes, funerary observances (葬儀)

remained largely undifferentiated from services of worship (祭儀).³⁴¹ This idea, whether accurate or not, was developed largely in the wake of archaeological surveys carried out on Okinoshima during the 1950s. In order to adequately address this theory, a thorough knowledge of early archipelagan religious thought would be required; lacking such knowledge, I am unable to explore this issue deeply at present, but would be interested in taking it up at a future date.

The final topic that demands further study is the diachronic development and cultural significance of *kanbun* and related writing styles (e.g. *sôrôbun* and *waka-konkôbun*) in Japan during the medieval period. It is generally agreed that if the historical Japanese language were to be divided into two broad epochs of development, the dividing line would fall somewhere in the Muromachi Period.³⁴² The reordering of society engendered by endemic violence and political decentralization brought previously disparate social groups together on an unprecedented scale. One result of this was an enormous mixing of language styles and orthographies. The *kanbun* corpus alone admits of a tremendous linguistic variety, reflecting the different backgrounds of writers and the diverse purposes, both functional and aesthetic, for which writing was being used. Yet much of this enormous body of writing remains outside the traditional scope of Japanese linguistic and literary history. Part of the reason for this can be found in the ideological

³⁴¹ Masaki, p. 46. This theory is termed *sôsai mibun-ka* (葬祭未分化) and, according to Masaki, was advanced by the archaeologist Yuba Tadanori, who led the second post-war archaeological survey of Okinoshima (1957-8). It has been invoked by the eminent historian Inoue Mitsusada in his *Nihon kodai no ôken to saishi* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1984).

³⁴² Shibatani, p. 119.

underpinnings of Japanese literary studies, which include a strong predilection towards casting *kana*-based writing as representative of an authentic Japanese identity while identifying *kanbun* as inherently foreign. As Jason Webb has observed, models of literary development that take the nation-state to be the pre-eminent unit of analysis have left little room for compositions which, like *kanbun* and its poetic counterpart *kanshi*, defy easy categorization as national literature.³⁴³ On the linguistic side, too, *kanbun* is rarely included in analyses of the “Japanese” language. Conclusions regarding myriad phenomena in the Japanese language (say, for example, topicalization and the evolution of the particle *wa*) are drawn on the basis of *wabun* or *wa-kan konkôbun* texts alone. But the influences of *kanbun* on other forms of Japanese writing and, in turn, even on the spoken language, were enormous; how, it should be asked, can one purport to understand the Japanese language in its historical entirety while effectively ignoring over fifty percent of the total volume of archipelagan writing? Beyond ideology, one simple but critical factor that impedes work in *kanbun* is the primitive state of lexicography, particularly in the area of *waka-kanbun*. As anyone who has attempted to read courtier diaries knows, when it comes to reference materials, neither Morohashi’s massive *Kanwa Jiten* nor your trusty “Japanese” *kogo jiten* completely suffices.³⁴⁴ With grammar, the

³⁴³ See Jason P. Webb, “In Good Order: Poetry, Reception, and Authority in the Nara and Early Heian Courts,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2005, esp. pp. 1-5, 25, and 28.

³⁴⁴ For medieval-era *kanbun* writing, particularly the “documentary style” (*kirokutai*, 記録体), helpful resources are Ikeda Shôichirô’s *Komonjo yôgo jiten* (Shinjinbutsu Ôraisha, 1991) and the recent *Kamakura Iibun ni miru chûsei no kotoba jiten* (Tôkyôdô, 2007). Still, these deal mostly

situation is the same: a reasonable understanding of canonical classical Chinese as given in, say, Pulleyblank *and* a solid grasp of the mechanics of classical Japanese are necessary, but not sufficient, to comprehend the structural dynamics of *waka-kanbun*.³⁴⁵ Due to its fundamental importance to the Japanese language and the development of Japanese cultural identity, it is high time that *kanbun*, the very fabric of East Asian macroculture, receive due attention. It is my greatest aspiration to contribute to the emerging discussion surrounding *kanbun* in particular, and the history of Japanese writing in general, as a doctoral student.

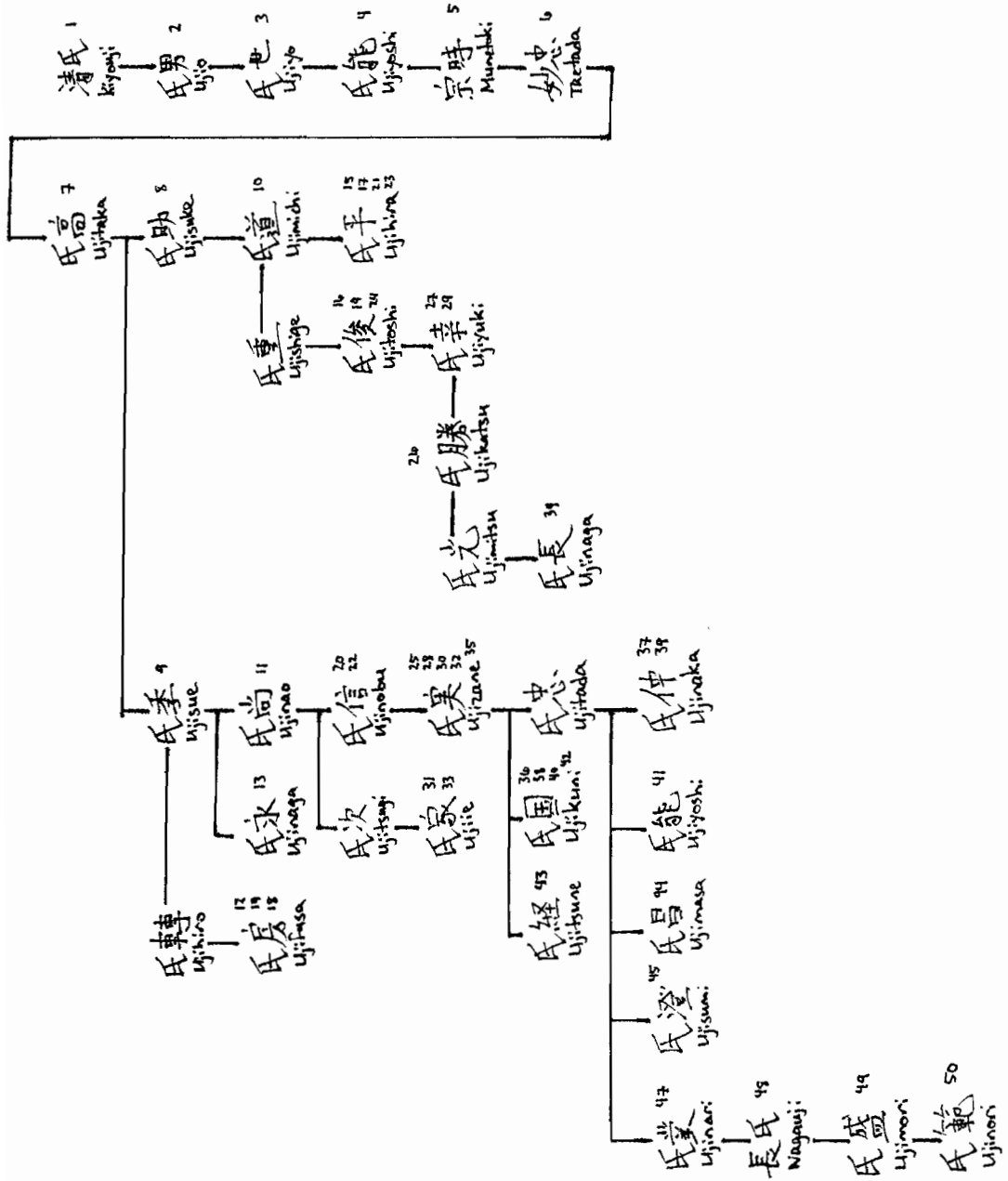
with “concept” terms or with words whose very peculiarity makes them stand out (e.g. *seifu* 青鼻, “money”).

³⁴⁵ Of the few treatments of the subject available, a reasonably recent article from the journal *Nihongogaku* provides a good introduction to the peculiarities of *waka-kanbun*. See Horihata Masaomi, “Kirokutai no kanbun,” in *Nihongogaku*, vol. 19 (Nov. 2000), pp. 40-49. This is, however, the only article to seriously treat the grammar of documentary *kanbun* published in the journal in the past twenty years. Horihata also deals briefly with the contribution of documentary *kanbun* to the broader Japanese lexicon (e.g. the development of the honorific verb *nasaru* 被成, which was used principally in *waka-kanbun*-type writing before moving into *wakan-konkôbun*).

APPENDIX

FAMILY TREE FOR THE FIRST FIFTY SHRINE HEADS

(Adapted from *Munakata Jinjashi*, vol. 2, p. 435)



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